DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 657 CS 511 332

AUTHOR	Sandel, Lenore
TITLE	Personal Qualities of a Language Arts Teacher: Traits and Perspectives, Daily Inspiration from Outstanding Educators.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Bloomington, IN.; Family Learning Association, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
ISBN	ISBN-0-9719874-9-1
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	127p.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0028
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication, 2805 E. 10th St. #140, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698 ($12.95). Web site: http://eric.indiana.edu. Family Learning Association, 3925 Hagan St., #101, Bloomington, IN 47401. Tel: 800-759-4723 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.kidscanlearn.com.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- ERIC Publications (071)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Language Arts; *Reflective Teaching; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Response; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS	*Teaching Perspectives

ABSTRACT

In this book 100 dynamic educators share some words that are important to them and what those words mean for teaching--here are the ideas that can start a teacher's day or stimulate new ideas for class activities. According to the book, each educator was asked to select a term that reflected an important idea for teaching; the terms appear in alphabetical order so it is easy to locate them. A recurring theme in the book is the need for teachers to see their personal strengths and skills as important contributions to their teaching. The following terms are addressed in the book: Adaptive; Age-Appropriate; Balance; Balanced Perspective; The Basics; Bonding; Caring; Collaboration; Community; Compassion; Cooperation; Crystallizing; Culturally Responsive Pedagogy; Curiosity; To Discover; Discussion; Ebullience; Emergent; Empathy; Encouraging; Energy; Engage; Enthusiasm; Ethical; Facilitator; Family Literacy; Flexibility; Formative Assessment; Friendship; A Good Teacher; Guide; Heart; Hidden; Honesty; Hope; Imagination; Imitative; Immersion; Incendiary; Inquiry; Inspiring; Integrity; Juggler; Kidwatching; Kindness; Laughter; Learner; Listener; Love; Metamorphosis; Motivation; Musing; "Obuchenie" (Russian); Open; Openness; Optimistic; Option; Partner; Passion; Performer; Perseverance; Perseverance and Reflection; Reflection; Respect; Rhetoric; Scholar Ethos; Self-Expression and Imagination; Self-Knowledge; Self-Renewal; Sensibility; Sensitivity; Spiritual Pedagogy; Struggle; Subversion; Support; Teach; Theory; Total Involvement and Total Commitment; Trust; Turbulence; Versatility; Vision; Visionary; Worldliness; and Yes and Solitude. (NKA)

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ED 467 657

Personal Qualities of a Language Arts Teacher

Traits and Perspectives, Daily Inspiration from Outstanding Educators

Lenore Sandel
Professor Emerita
Hofstra University

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ERIC
Educational Resources Information Center

Published by

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication
Indiana University, 2805 E. 10th St., Suite 140
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
Carl B. Smith, Director

and

The Family Learning Association
3925 E. Hagan St., Suite 101
Bloomington, IN 47401

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This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-99-CO-0028. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Acknowledgements

Concepts

Several people have shared in the development of this manuscript. Their contributions are intrinsic to the impact of the book and its message.

Sincerest appreciation to:

Dr. Carl B. Smith, Director, ERIC Clearinghouse for Reading, English, and Communication, whose vision and professional experience provided the conceptual direction to the process of completion of the manuscript.

Linda Merklin, Administrative Supervisor, Hofstra University Editing office, whose kindly supervision expedited the several stages in the preparation of the manuscript.

Barbara Warburton, Assistant Administrative Supervisor, Hoftra University Editing office, whose guardianship and ultimate secretarial skills prepared the manuscript through the completion.

Darra M. Ellis, ERIC publications assistant, whose astute attention to the myriad details of communication in responding to inquiries supported the accuracy of each measure of progress.

Phyllis Bosworth, Administrative Secretary, Hofstra University Department of Literacy Studies, whose continuing attention to the multitude of secretarial needs and correspondence supported the progression of the manuscript.

and, with respect, appreciation, and gratitude,

To the contributors to this Daily Inspiration Vocabulary, a "thank you" from the readers who will be enriched in their teaching lives through your singular word...

To my husband, Leonard, who shares from seed to harvest
and to our daughter, Susan, choreographer of word and image

Foreword

When Dr. Sandel first proposed this book, I thought it was a great idea to have an inspirational guide for language arts teachers all based on the thoughts of prominent educators. Her mechanism for generating the content was also intriguing, that is, asking each writer to select a term that reflected an important idea for teaching.

Then came the hard part. Lenore Sandel had to collect these quotes from busy educators across the land. Can you imagine the time and trouble it took to contact one hundred people, get them to select a term they would write about, and then to prod them to get the job done? Not a task for the fainthearted.

As the statements came from the writers, they differed in style, in length, and in perception of what the task actually was. Our editors struggled through several versions of this book with Dr. Sandel, all in our quest to bring you a readable, helpful, inspirational daily guide.

Now you have it in your hand. Put it on your desk and turn a page each day. Or you may seek out a term that fits your current need. The terms appear in alphabetical order so it is easy to locate them. Though most of the writers have a connection to language arts, almost any teacher can read these statements and reflect on them with profit.

A recurring theme in this book is the need for teachers to see their personal strengths and skills as important contributions to their teaching. Certainly the professional skills learned in classes are valuable, but they need to combine those skills with the strengths that they bring from within themselves to make a powerful contribution to the classroom environment and to their students.

The research that stands behind this book is available on the ERIC website. It will greatly expand your search for information and will convince you of the validity of the thoughts that you will find in this book. Go to http://eric.indiana.edu. The research is in the bookstore section under the title of this book.

We are sure that you will benefit from reading these insights from some of the best known educators in the country.

Carl B. Smith, Director
ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication

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Introduction

This book speaks to each teacher in the collaborative voice of many experienced ones with a compelling urgency to share what they have learned. It provides guideposts along the way, from point of departure to certification, from text to practice, from anticipated goal to vivid reality. These signposts take the form of personal qualities and resources, of attitudes and behaviors, that beckon to the "teacher-as-a-person" – the human dimension of Carl Rogers' concept of self. It is the teacher-as-a-person that encourages the practitioner to pause for a "teachable moment" or to explore a side path of lesson-plan inquiry.

The contributors to this manuscript are respected educators. They share a need to strengthen the abilities of beginning teachers through personal channels that bolster the academic knowledge base. In this book, a host of experienced teacher-observers offer their own earnest prompts – in the form of personal qualities they believe critical to teaching success. The clear, dynamic fervor of personal design and the discovery of the human channels of teaching and learning are the twin foci of the entries. Their goal is to reach teachers on a personal level, approach them as individuals, and give them a sense of self in the practice of teaching within a prescribed program. Each contributor chose his or her own term as a stimulus for thoughts on teaching.

The terms in this book are not merely a listing. Each selection is supported with a rationale that reflects conviction and commitment to the teaching self. Of the seven priorities of the current U.S. Department of Education *Report 2000*, the fifth one (teacher quality) states: "There will be a talented, dedicated and well-prepared teacher in every classroom." The *Report 2000* concludes with a timely reference to the issue of standards: "The highest standards in the world would do little good if every child does not have a caring, competent, and qualified teacher."

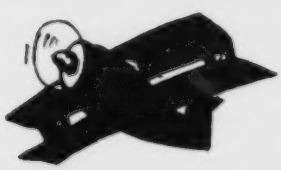
The important thing here is that the qualities emanating from each teacher's self-attitude, feelings, perspectives, behaviors, and initiatives do affect classroom relationships and teaching styles. It is proposed, therefore, that the teacher-as-a-person factor be given more attention in the full scope of teacher preparation.

ADAPTIVE

Lyn Corno

To me, this word describes teachers who build teaching activities around what students bring to the learning situation – those who actively use students' comments, observations, work, and emotional responses as both a basis and signal for events in the classroom. Adaptive teachers teach "to this group of students" more than they teach "a curriculum." Adaptive teachers believe that curricula are meant to be adjusted to meet the needs of particular students. They seek to capitalize on students' strengths and at the same time circumvent weaknesses. As students gain their experience and expertise in the tasks at hand, adaptive teachers become less intrusive and begin gently to encourage students to "fly solo." The ultimate goal of adaptive teaching is independent and self-regulated learning.

Adaptive teaching is especially important in today's schools. Because student diversity is increasing so rapidly, one form of program or curriculum cannot possibly do for all. Moreover, teaching expertise requires more than canned delivery of innovative educational programs and models; it requires an ability to customize and tailor delivery to best suit students in a given situation.



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AGE-APPROPRIATE

Arden R. Post, Ed.D.

Successful teachers get to know their students and community well. They also have knowledge of learning theory, child development, and educational research. Combining these two areas of knowledge – the practical and the theoretical – they plan lessons, choose teaching methods, strategies, and materials, and conduct class in such a way as to obtain student attention, interest, involvement and, ultimately, maximal learning. The teacher makes age-appropriate choices for lessons and has age-appropriate expectations for student involvement and performance. Let an example illustrate:

An upper elementary or middle school teacher wants to get her sixth graders actively involved in literacy activities with *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* (1963) by Christopher Paul Watson. She figures she'll get maximum attention for about 45 minutes by using a variety of tasks. She wants to pique her students' interest and make them eager to read, and she wants to integrate the teaching of the various language arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. She begins her lesson with a few vocabulary words that will be important for constructing meaning from the first chapter. She informs the class that they will work on *story impressions*. She asks the students to work in groups (either formed by her or by themselves, according to what she feels is best) and discuss the meaning of the words, after which she answers questions about any words they couldn't figure out. She then directs them to write a *probable passage*, in which they use the vocabulary words to construct a brief paragraph explaining what they think will happen in the story. The students share their paragraphs in the same groups. Then the teacher (or students in groups, or each student silently) reads the first chapter; the purpose of reading, or listening, has been established: See how close we came to guessing the author's message. Whole class discussion follows the reading.

This illustration indicates that the teacher knows the students' attention span, their social desires to work together, and their need to relate learning to their own lives (the story is about a family with three children who do not always get along). It also shows that she understands current literacy theory (integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing), a current definition of reading (constructing meaning through a dynamic interaction among reader, text, and context), learning theory (personal construction of meaning and relation of new knowledge to old), etc. Her expectations for spelling and writing in the probable passage will be age-appropriate: Certain conventions have been mastered by certain grades. The teacher has chosen age-appropriate material and activities to obtain maximal attention, interest, and involvement – which should result in maximal learning.

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BALANCE

Arlene R. Delloro, Ed.D.

A sense of proportion – or balance – is a characteristic of the successful teacher. While educational battles are waged in the headlines of our daily newspapers, we as educators wage our own daily battles as we seek to choose from a plethora of conflicting philosophies and paradigms of practice. With our students' best interests in our hearts and minds, we strive to create classrooms that will meet the needs of a diverse student population in a rapidly changing society. In short, we strive for balance.

A successful teacher must balance the physical, social, emotional, and academic needs of all students. He or she must be adept at choosing what hat to wear when dealing with the myriad of student needs – at evaluating each student's unique circumstance. Is this an abused child? A neglected child? A latchkey child? A child from a one-parent family? A child whose parents are not active partners with the school? The successful teacher must know when to be the parent or the social worker or the psychologist or the friend, in addition to being the teacher.

A successful teacher must balance his or her desire for students to construct their own meaning with the need to work toward educational equity. Children come to us with an incredible range of life experiences. Some students begin school as veritable *tabula rasae* (blank slates). Others begin with a richness of experience that poses its own kind of dilemma as we search for learning activities that will sustain the momentum of their interest and abilities.

A successful teacher must balance his or her own comfort zone with the professional responsibility to keep abreast of current research and to change when it is in the best interests of children. Teachers, more than almost any other group of professionals, must be willing to do things differently. They must embrace change and seek to grow along with their students.

A successful teacher must balance his or her personal needs with the educational needs of children. Teachers' unions were created to protect what was historically a vulnerable choice of

vocation. In some places, however, those unions have become a monolithic presence that functions as a rigid protector of the status quo. Balance between personal rights and children's needs is a heavy responsibility of today's educators.

In short, teachers must strive for balance in many ways and on many fronts. They must strive for equilibrium without predictability, stability without monotony, and equality without invariability.

BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

Dixie Lee Spiegel

A successful teacher is one who strives to meet the needs of every child and believes every child can learn. Being such a teacher requires having a balanced perspective, rather than a narrow one.

The teacher with a balanced perspective is open and flexible. She or he is willing to consider new ideas and approaches, discard previously held beliefs and practices, and grow. Such a teacher is ready to try something new when the old is not working. She or he is not hampered by preconceived ideas of what should work, but bases decisions on what actually does or does not work.

The teacher with a balanced perspective is child-centered. Such a teacher acknowledges the wide range of diversity within any classroom and is committed to identifying how each child learns best. He or she recognizes that the diversity of children demands diversity in teaching.

The teacher with a balanced perspective understands the big picture of literacy development and does not overemphasize one aspect of literacy to the exclusion of another. He or she views both word identification and comprehension as important; explores both aesthetic and efferent responses to literature; makes a wide variety of literacy materials available to children; and takes into consideration both portfolio and standardized assessment.

The teacher with a balanced perspective is a decision-maker. He or she has the confidence needed to make the multitude of decisions a successful teacher makes daily. Such a teacher is a risk-taker who understands that by carefully observing children, he or she can quickly correct risks that go wrong.

Because a teacher with a balanced perspective is open and flexible, child-centered, and aware of the whole literacy picture, she or he is able to offer the best to children – and they must have no less.

THE BASICS

William Ayers

"If I only had a home... a heart... a brain... the nerve."

The four hopeful seekers skipping down the yellow brick road toward Oz sing their desires to one another and to the heavens. Each has diagnosed a deficiency, identified a lack, recognized a need. Each has become painfully conscious of something missing, a hole in need of repair. Each is stirred to action against an obstacle to his or her fullness, and each gathers momentum and power from the others, from intimate relationships forged through collective struggles.

This is not a bad start for teachers seeking a vocabulary of basic qualities in their quest for wholeness and for goodness in teaching – a home, a heart, a brain, the nerve. There is more, to be sure, but these can send you skipping down your own yellow brick road into the beyond.

Teaching is intellectual and ethical work; it takes thought, reflection, and caring to do it well. It takes a brain and a heart. The first challenge for teachers is to embrace students as three-dimensional creatures with hearts and minds and skills and dreams and capacities of their own – as people much like ourselves. This embrace is initially an act of faith – an assumption of capacity even when it is not immediately visible – because we work most often in schools where the reigning common sense calls for grouping kids on the flimsiest evidence. We have become accustomed to the toxic habit of labeling youngsters on the basis of their deficits. A teacher needs a brain to break through the cotton wool smothering the mind, to see beyond the blizzard of labels to each specific child, trembling and whole and real. A teacher needs a heart to fully grasp the importance of that gesture, to recognize that every child is precious – the one and only who will ever trod this earth – and that he or she deserves the best a teacher can give.

A teacher who takes up this fundamental challenge is a teacher working against the grain; that's why he or she needs the nerve. All the pressures of schooling push teachers to act as clerks

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and functionaries – interchangeable parts in a vast, gleaming, and highly rationalized production line. To teach with a heart and a brain – to see education as a deeply humanizing enterprise that opens infinite possibilities for students – requires courage. Courage is a quality nurtured in solidarity with others; it is an achievement of like-minded colleagues. In order to teach with thought and care and courage, you really need a home.

The four seekers lurching toward Oz provide still another lesson for us. We can all constantly work to identify obstacles to our freedom, to our fullness. The obstacles will change as we develop and grow, but there will always be more to know, more to become. We can now know in advance that there is no wizard at the end of the road, no higher power with a magic wand to solve our all-too-human problems. We can recognize that the people with the problems are also the people with the solutions – and that waiting for the lawmakers, the system, or the union to get it right before we get it right is to wait a lifetime. We can look inside ourselves, summon strengths we never knew we had, and connect with like-minded teachers, parents, and kids to create the schools and classrooms we deserve – thoughtful places of decency, peace, freedom, and justice. We are on the way, then, to our real Emerald City.

BONDING

Dr. Scott Steckler

Bonding is the practice of developing an emotional attachment to a student – an attachment characterized by an understanding and a caring expression and exchange of thoughts and ideas. It demands total respect on the part of the teacher, which is almost always returned by the student. Although bonding with *all* students is desirable, it is especially necessary with those who have had negative school experiences, are unmotivated, or have discipline problems. To "go the extra mile", to be successful with exceptional or learning-challenged students, bonding is a requisite.

CARING

Nancy Bertrand

My choice would have to be caring. In response to the question, "What do you remember about your favorite teacher?" my university students overwhelmingly say, "My favorite teacher made me feel like he or she cared about me as a person, not just a student."

Caring enough to make everyone special.

Caring deeply about content.

Caring to make a difference.

CARING

Nel Noddings

After hearing about one of my books, *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (1992), in which I discuss caring for self, intimate others, strangers and global others, plants and animals, and objects and ideas, a prospective reader complained that it was not possible, after all, to care for *everything*. He is right, and that has always been one of my major points. Even if we confine caring to human beings, we cannot possibly care in any meaningful way for everyone. That means we have to learn to care differently in various domains and encounters.

Caring for those in our immediate circle calls for responses to particular others, and these responses must be addressed to particular needs. We do not decide in some abstract fashion how family members should be treated and then treat them all exactly alike. Similarly, we respond to colleagues, students, and neighbors in ways that fit the particular relationships and situations in which we encounter them. Students, for example, are not interchangeable units to be treated by rule alone – however fairly that rule may be applied. Address, listening, and response are at the heart of caring, and a relation can be properly called *caring* only if the cared-for recognizes the efforts of the carer as such.

In the wider arena of national and global life, we sometimes suppose we have a duty to exercise universal care or love. However, when we understand what care involves – its requirement of understanding and individually designed response – we know we cannot care for everyone. We can be prepared to care – to respond as carers to those human beings we actually encounter – and we can contribute to relief organizations, which (we trust) will provide resources through on-site carers. But even as we do this in response to, say, a scene of dreadful suffering shown on evening television, we know there are other agonies in other parts of the world about which we can do nothing. Faced with this clear logistical fact, we do not give up the commitment to care. Rather, we try harder to care where we can and to encourage others to care in situations where we cannot. This

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suggests a life of intelligent sensitivity. Caring must be constrained and directed or it loses its meaning.

Many people respond with enthusiasm to a call to care for animals, plants, and the environment. This is both understandable and commendable. But, again, a reckless form of pseudo-caring may lead to unconsidered demands for unwise civic action and behavior that hurts human beings, or even animals themselves, in the name of caring for them. Leaving certain animal populations to *nature*, for example, may doom many creatures to cruel deaths. To care, we must respond to *need*, and it usually takes work to understand the real needs of others – human, animal, or plant.

Far from a call to *care for everything*, my hope is that children will learn that caring requires exquisite powers of perception and differentiation. What does the object of our care require? What is our own responsibility? And what signs should we look for in the cared-for that will assure us our caring has been received? Those who have learned to care must show how it is done and provide the young with guided practice and support. There are no formulas for such learning.

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COLLABORATION

Susan Hanson

I don't think you can teach a child something if you don't involve him or her in the learning. While the teacher helps the student, the student likewise helps the teacher – to know more about teaching and how to reach students. Both teacher and student are actively engaged and learning together. Teaching is a give-and-take endeavor; each gives in order to grow and learn. It takes collaboration for true learning to take place.

When introducing a new book for a child to read, the teacher engages the child in a collaborative discussion of what the book might be about, based on the title and pictures. He or she helps relate the child's own experiences to what might happen in the story. As the child discusses the plot of the book, he or she becomes prepared to read it with meaning. During the reading, the child does his or her best to read the text, with the teacher prompting for strategy use as needed. Together, the child and the teacher grow – the child as a reader, and the teacher as a collaborator in the child's learning.

Not only do educators collaborate with children, they collaborate with each other to grow as professionals. By sharing new ideas, discussing observations and options, reflecting on past experiences, problem solving, and creating new teaching materials, teachers collaborating become greater than the sum of all the teachers working alone.

COMMUNITY

Dr. Kathleen Schatzberg

The dictionary defines community as a group having common interests. What could better describe the classroom? Teachers who adopt the idea that everyone in the classroom shares a common interest in learning will achieve better results in the short term and grow better citizens in the long term. Robert Putnam, the Harvard professor whose article "Bowling Alone" provoked fierce debate on the meaning of community, speaks of the "social capital" that communities build when their members join together to promote the common welfare. Surely teachers can do the same when they teach their students to take responsibility for each other's learning, and thereby build learning communities within each classroom.

COMPASSION

Dr. Blanche D. Blank

Compassion is the single most essential ingredient for teaching success. If you don't have it in your make-up, everything else – every other attribute or specific skill – will not amount to much.

COMPASSION

Thelma Nelson

Compassion provides teachers with an understanding of students, their behaviors, and their learning needs. This understanding is a vital part of creating a successful environment in which students can excel academically.

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COOPERATION

Dr. Harlan Rimmerman

Cooperation is a life skill that should be in the curriculum of every teacher. Since the one-room schoolhouses of the early 1800s, students have had to cooperate to be successful – and in any modern-day classroom, this is still the case.

The ability to cooperate well leads not only to increased learning in school, but to finding and keeping a job in later life. In today's society, everyone needs to work with everyone else. Whether working with one other person or in a business with hundreds – even thousands – of people, cooperation skills are necessary for success. The United States Department of Labor reports that 76 percent of those who lose their jobs do so because they cannot cooperate with their coworkers.

Successful teachers teach their students to cooperate by providing opportunities to learn and use cooperation skills. Cooperative learning has long been a mainstay of teaching these skills. Properly used, a cooperative learning lesson will teach students how to cooperate with one another, as well as how to use social skills. Learning to be an active listener, learning to paraphrase what someone else has said, learning not to use "put downs," and learning to respect one another are lifelong skills every student needs.

It is imperative that teachers not only teach cooperation skills, but also model them. When the teacher works with other teachers to teach students, or when students see teachers working together to prepare projects or simply talking together, it sends a message about the importance of teamwork. Cooperation is an essential skill for success in both teaching and learning. Our future depends upon it.

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CRYSTALLIZING

Howard Gardner

We cannot make individuals into something they are not meant to be, but we can help them realize their potentials and guide those potentials in constructive ways. What makes a difference in the lives of so many is a crystallizing experience: a moment, an encounter, a book, a work of art that says to them, "This can be you. This brings together your personal potential, indicates what you could become, how you could feel positively about yourself and at the same time make a contribution to the larger community." Those individuals and experiences (museums are my favorite examples) that are best at crystallizing others, and particularly the young, are the ones most likely to be educationally effective. If they can help the learner "follow through" on the initial crystallizing experience, so much the better.

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Lynne T. Diaz-Rico

Every school has its own culture – a set of traditions, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations embedded deep in the daily life of teachers and students. For some children, the culture of their school may be so different from the culture of their home that they have difficulty learning. However, it is not enough simply to attribute academic failure to a cultural mismatch between home and school. Teachers must learn to bridge the gap between home and school for the benefit of students.

Teachers who understand students' cultures can design instruction to meet their learning needs. They can invite students to learn by welcoming them, making them feel that they belong, and presenting learning as a task at which they can succeed. Teaching styles, interaction patterns, classroom organization, curriculum, and involvement with parents and the community are all factors that the teacher can adapt. The result of such adaptation is culturally responsive pedagogy.

Teachers should not expect to be fully knowledgeable about every cultural nuance; however, they should realize that there are general patterns of behavior within which all human societies operate. Teachers who practice culturally responsive pedagogy are aware that values, beliefs, and practices vary from culture to culture. Values are manifest in social customs – in vital areas of life such as health, religion, law, the use of time, the extent of personal space between individuals, beliefs about interpersonal touching, nonverbal signs and symbols such as clothing styles and gestures, and rites and rituals such as greetings and tokens of respect. Values also influence attitudes, such as beliefs about the relative importance of work and play. Students come to schools with expectations about learning that are based upon the roles and status of authority figures in their various cultures. Students are also influenced by other factors, such as gender, social class, age, occupation, educational level, position in the family, food preferences, learning modalities and styles, styles of discourse and use of language, and beliefs about cooperation and competition.

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Students' perceptions about their future and its possibilities stem from their culture. This affects their school performance.

Economic, legal, and political issues also affect schooling. For example, many families who have recently immigrated to the United States are forced to live in impoverished communities where crime, violence, and job scarcity make adjustment difficult. Interwoven into this rich cultural/economic/political/legal texture are religious beliefs and practices.

Cultural variables also affect parental involvement in the school. Teachers who reach out to parents are rewarded with a richer understanding of students' potential. Parent outreach may take several forms: explicit open-door policies; specific kinds of written information sent home; periodic calls to parents when things are going well; timely notification about academic problems; and use of various means to solicit parents' views on education.

Teachers can use observations, interviews, home visits, printed materials, books and magazines, and conversations with students, parents, and community members to learn about other cultures. They can then use this understanding to organize classroom activities in ways that promote learning and help all students bridge the gap between home and school cultures.

CURIOSITY

Patricia O. Richards, Ed.D.

Curiosity is chronic wondering; is a passion for knowing; is the desire for insights; leads to the joy of discovery; is the satisfaction of seeing; is the need to solve problems; is the motivation for research; leads to the pleasure of making connections; is the love of learning; is the impetus for self-actualization.

Susan Ohanian, educator and author, said "we teach who we are." How true. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, teachers serve as role models for learners. A student recently wrote me a letter after completing my children's literature course. In it she said, "I have learned a lot about the kind of teacher I want to be from you." As I've said earlier, the course was about children's literature – not about teaching. But while I was consciously teaching content related to the subject, I was unconsciously teaching about teaching. I was teaching the genuine enthusiasm I have for reading and for books, my insatiable need to know, my conviction that I can make a difference by helping prospective teachers see the power and pleasure of knowing about the world and themselves through reading.

Without *being* learners who are genuinely curious about many things, teachers are powerless to promote learning. Without curiosity, there are no questions. Without questions, there are no answers. And without answers, there is no change.

The word "curiosity" applies to teachers in another context as well – in the sense of being an oddity. Anyone who pursues teaching as a profession is certainly an oddity. For it is a profession fraught with uncertainty, with criticism, with lack of prestige, with inadequate financial compensation, with tremendous time demands, and with ever-increasing challenges. Teachers may never see the results of their efforts, may never know what – if anything – they accomplish in their students' lives. They must live on the unshakable belief that learning will

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occur. Teaching is more than a career; it is a way of life. It is the deeply held conviction that, despite all odds, we can positively influence our students and make a difference in the world.

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TO DISCOVER

Morris Freedman

No child enters a class with a clean slate. From the earliest years through adolescence, each bears the imprint of a journey of discovery and experiences with family, friends, and teachers. On their way to developing unique personalities – and, indeed, through life – children are continually involved in the process of discovery. This applies to self-discovery as well as to discovery of their surroundings and their universe. Successful teachers help children to know, feel, and do – to develop attitudes and behaviors consistent with good citizenship. Discovery, awareness, and the ability to find meaning in words, numbers, concepts, and ideas are all outcomes of teacher interaction and thoughtful instruction.

The successful teacher provides opportunities for discovery through planned activities, inquiry, hands-on experiences, observations, deduction, and research. For example, in mathematics, using manipulatives leads to conceptualizing and gives meaning to numbers. This basic approach, using the concrete to understand the abstract, is the "Rosetta Stone" of teaching, helping students discover and give meaning to their environment.

The physical and social sciences offer many opportunities for discovering both the natural world and the world created by people. Successful teachers bring the world into the classroom, offering vicarious experiences made possible through technology and the in-depth exploration of original documents. They lead children to experiment, observe, and examine alternate conclusions. In brief, they help them form the foundations for lifelong learning.

Through communication and creative and performing arts, successful teachers help children discover their abilities to tell and write stories, illustrate the pictures in their minds, make music and dance, and act out the meaning of words written by others. Effective teachers lead children to learn more about themselves and their innate, creative abilities.

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Individual and team sports allow children to discover their agility, speed, strength, and coordination. The successful teacher provides opportunities for children to experience many forms of physical activity through play and games that help strengthen self-awareness and confidence and begin to make connections to lifelong recreational pursuits.

Benjamin Bloom's "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives," written more than 40 years ago, offers a classification of cognitive educational goals. We can extrapolate from his exhaustive list to identify what the successful teacher should do. However, there is much more to successful teaching – and helping children to discover is an essential component.

DISCUSSION

Donna Alvermann

Students in the middle grades use discussion to help comprehend what they read. This connection between peer interaction and comprehension has been examined by philosophers of education and psychologists alike. One hypothesis – that peer interaction induces cognitive conflict which can lead to cognitive restructuring and growth in understanding – has special appeal at the middle grade level.

All too often, teachers in the middle grades feel compelled to cover content, and in their attempt to do so, end up employing a fast-paced delivery that results in students feeling "talk-deprived." Teachers who create spaces in which young adolescents can negotiate meaning through collaborative interaction strategies will more effectively facilitate student learning.

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EBULLIENCE

Jim Cox

Ebullience enhances all other traits that are indispensable for effective teaching – such as those of character, intellect, and understanding.

Most learners will not buy the adage that there are no dull subjects; they know better. But in the presence of the enthused, exciting teacher who exudes pleasure in exploration and discovery, we open an eye or two – and soon the earthworm we've ignored becomes a source of wonder and curiosity. Such enthusiasm is contagious. It invites us to live in the caves of Plato's parable, as well as in a space capsule, viewing the world. Routine calculations with numerals can become exquisite, while challenging thoughts and ideas can release the poetry in our souls and the power in our minds.

So, too, can the ebullient spirit whet appetites for the study and appreciation of music and art, and for the use of the body to express beauty and order in movement and to build strength and endurance.

In truth, we share with our students and with others the awesome mysteries of life. The enthusiastic, joyful pursuit of understanding is indeed the pursuit of happiness.

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EMERGENT

Robert E. Kahn

What are the characteristics of emergent literacy for a beginning teacher? In my view, a beginning teacher committed to emergence as a philosophy and a practice is: (1) willing to take risks; (2) aware of a relevant context; (3) self-organizing; and (4) student-centered.

Much teaching today is staid and boring for teachers as well as for students, and does not lead to learning. If this is to change, teachers must be willing to take risks, looking upon their lives and teaching practices as open systems in which new equilibriums will develop. That means neither personal ideas nor institutional structures are assumed to be fixed and determined, but rather are open to new influences, new possibilities. Teaching is a process whose product is sometimes learning. However, it is important to let the process of teaching evolve, rather than be always trying to test the product.

The general exhortation to take risks must be grounded in context, however. As Petrie and Oshlag (1993) remind us: "Learning must always start with what the student presently knows. Then we are faced with the problem of how the student can come to know anything radically new" (pp. 582-583). This is the same question Plato raised in the Meno paradox of how someone who does not know can acquire new knowledge. Teachers have a responsibility to teach students how to learn – how to read and write and think – in the context of a curriculum that is often far too rigid.

If we, as teachers, are willing to take risks and remain conscious of context, then we learn to balance two paradoxical principles: We become self-organizing and at the same time student-centered. We no longer rely on a textbook or a preset lesson plan to resolve all questions; rather, we respond to specific learning needs in a particular classroom or tutoring context. We trust ourselves enough to accept that "particular tasks require the balance of power to be handed from teacher to student" (Nunan & Lamb, 1996, p. 3). This is a difficult task. As Doll (1993) has

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pointed out, there is an inherent disequilibrium in such a process because, as teachers, we "must ask the student to doubt in a fundamental way the procedures being used and assumptions being made" (p. 83). We come to recognize that learning is a process of negotiation between the parties involved.

In my vocabulary, an emergent teacher is a changing, self-organizing, student-centered teacher, continually adapting to a particular context. In the midst of our reading, writing, and experience, we emerge as teachers. It is an exciting process.

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EMPATHY

John R. McIntyre, Ed.D.

To be effective as a teacher, you must be able to put yourself in the student's position and imagine what it's like to try to understand the concept or skill being taught. Given the student's prior experience and present level of knowledge or skill, you must ask yourself: "How likely is it that this student will comprehend this new learning at this time?" This willingness to view a situation through the student's eyes is the cornerstone of empathy – by vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another.

Empathy is not an inert quality; it is procedural in nature. That is to say, it requires that the teacher assume responsibility for deliberately trying to determine each student's current level of knowledge and skill before introducing new learning. This ensures that the new learning is based on the needs of the student rather than on some external, preconceived list of expectations that bears no relation to the student's prior experience. It allows the teacher to recognize and deliver appropriate instruction for the greatest possible number of students.

The empathetic teacher continues to exercise empathy after the initial instruction, throughout the instructional process and during assessment. The teacher who has empathy for his or her students *uses* their language, their activities, and their body language as feedback, adjusting instruction accordingly to achieve greater understanding. Recognizing the value in attending to these messages, the empathetic teacher establishes an environment and provides the means for student feedback that can be translated into improved teaching and learning. He or she realizes that the fundamental way to ensure that instruction has been appropriate is to provide the students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding. The empathetic teacher has a burning need to know that his or her instruction has taken hold in the students.

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Empathy is a mental alertness that directs the teacher's conscious efforts to sense the student's intellectual and emotional conditions with respect to the task at hand. The propensity to be empathetic is inherent in an individual's personality, although it can be further developed by proper and effective training.

EMPATHY

Hyman Enzer

The capacity to identify one's self with the other.

To incorporate in one's self the multiple selves in a constantly changing social-psychological atmosphere.

To be alert to all the subliminal and overt cues while balancing the objective teaching messages – the outgoing and incoming feeding and feedbacks.

To maintain one's own integrity and principles without imposing them on others.

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EMPATHY

Karen Osterman

From my perspective, empathy is, or should be, one of the key words in the teacher's lexicon. By definition, empathy is an identification of oneself with another, an entering into the feeling or spirit of another person. Metaphorically, we know empathy as "seeing the world through another's eyes" or "walking a mile in his shoes." In the classroom, empathy influences whether kids learn, how they learn, and what they learn.

Dewey has tried to teach us two important things about learning: 1) that learning is personal and social as well as cognitive, and 2) that the best learning occurs when it is rooted in and begins with our personal experience and understanding. Empathy is the means by which we, as teachers, develop a deep understanding of that starting point. Cognitively, what is our students' knowledge base, and how can we build on those strengths and experiences? Personally and socially, how do they feel when they walk into our classrooms? What is going on in their lives (home and school) that may be supporting or hindering their learning? Whether and how well they learn will be influenced by how well we, as teachers, understand their experience, appreciate and acknowledge their strengths, and accept their needs.

Empathy is also a bridge to student engagement. Unfortunately, research tells us that students become increasingly disengaged from learning as they progress through school, with even high achievers showing little interest or involvement in their work. Research also tells us that teacher support and caring is one of the most important factors influencing student engagement. Caring teachers show in many different ways that they understand their students – as learners and as individuals with needs, interests, and feelings. They empathize and go one step further: Because they understand, they structure a classroom environment that responds to these individual needs. And when teachers recognize and address student needs, students respond with appreciation and cooperation.

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The current dialogue about schools places an almost exclusive emphasis on cognitive outcomes. Empathy plays a role in achieving these narrowly defined, but important, outcomes. At the cognitive level, students who feel cared for and respected by the teacher tend to care more about the teacher and about his or her subject interest. They are more interested and more receptive, and they learn more. Equally important, empathy sets the stage for the students' social development. If students are to engage in healthy and constructive social relationships, they must learn to understand the other person's perspective; and, as research shows, children learn empathy best when adults consistently and meaningfully express the importance of caring for others through their words and actions.

Teachers, then, who demonstrate that they themselves take time to see the world through their students' eyes will reap the reward. In a climate of empathy, students are more likely to care about learning, to accept the values and norms of the classroom, and to learn more – not only about science or math or reading, but about how to establish caring and supportive relationships with adults and peers.

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EMPATHY

Dr. Mark Rosenbaum

Empathy is the ability to spontaneously and accurately perceive, accept, and respond to the state of mind of another person. It is a special type of sensitivity that enables people to put themselves in another person's place. Empathy is a quality that enables a good teacher to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with children and adults.

For a teacher, the ability to process feedback from students about their feelings, state of mind, and emotional well-being can allow him or her to contribute to those students' social and emotional growth. Sometimes, an empathetic teacher will go so far as to help a youngster identify his or her feelings, even if they are not being spoken out loud. For example, if a child accidentally slams a door on another student, both youngsters deserve attention. The student who is injured requires immediate attention and assistance, of course. But the child who slammed the door is likely to be feeling tremendous guilt and sorrow, even if he or she is not expressing it outwardly. A teacher with empathy understands this and responds to the needs of both youngsters. Empathy is an important, rapport-building personal characteristic of any teacher who is to meet the individual needs of every student.

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ENCOURAGING

Edward Zigler

Encouraging is a word often used in conjunction with education. By giving encouragement, the belief goes, the teacher supports a child's learning and helps him or her keep going even when the going is difficult. But encouragement is not a soft term, connoting a mere nurturing pat on the head for effort. Rather, it means the "giving of courage" – the courage to keep trying when the challenge is great, the courage to undertake material and goals that at first seem impossibly hard, the courage to make demands on the developing self.

The encouraging teacher does not make the work easy by praising all attempts equally. He or she is not an indiscriminate congratulator, but is instead a demanding taskmaster. By setting the task at a high but reachable level, by emboldening the student to reach new levels of mastery, and by guiding his or her effort with a sure but flexible hand, the teacher is "encouraging" in the best and truest sense of the word.

ENERGY

Ellen H. Katz, Ph.D.

The American Heritage Dictionary for the English Language (1973) defines energy as "the capacity for action or accomplishment". As such, energy is an essential quality for teaching.

Teaching is a very demanding profession. Although many think it is just a nine-to-three job, the truth is much different. Frequently, teachers work through their lunch hours or free periods, or stay after school to work with students. In addition, they spend hours researching and planning for their classes – hours spent after school and on weekends, because it is impossible to get it done during the school day. Other responsibilities – such as budgeting, inventorying supplies, and ordering equipment – also consume time. And then there are the endless committee and department meetings, as well as PTA nights, Open School Nights for parents, and various and sundry other after-school events.

Elementary school teachers spend hours preparing individual progress reports for their students four times a year. At the secondary level, teachers often assist students with their career choices or help them prepare recommendations or essays for college or scholarship applications. In an evaluation of hours spent on activities outside the teaching contract responsibilities, teachers in Collier County, Florida were found to spend an average of 200 extra hours per year. This amounts to 10-20 extra hours per week.

Nor is teaching a job that requires only 10 months of the year. During summers, teachers often sharpen their skills by attending college classes or workshops to learn new techniques. Still others teach summer school or become involved in school-sponsored summer activities. And teachers are frequently found in their classrooms before school starts in September, setting up and preparing for students' arrival.

Some schools have mentoring programs, which assign teachers duties beyond the regular teaching contract. Other

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assignments that come up from time to time include coaching, sponsoring a club or field trip, and even translating materials from English into another language for the burgeoning immigrant population.

Energy, as a quality for teaching, is critical. It is virtually impossible to do without. But not only is it necessary in teaching; it is a quality that is useful in any profession or business.

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ENERGY

Dr. William M. Timpson

Have you ever felt energized by hearing a brilliant speaker? I once was energized in such a way by Martin Luther King, Jr. As his thunder about injustice and appeals for support rolled in on us, I could feel our collective energies lifted and echoed back in calls of "Amen" and "Hallelujah!" Even today, my memory of the spark he lit continues to teach me.

As a teacher, you must know that energy can't flourish in a vacuum. Obviously, your own health and emotional well-being are important, but these are only parts of the equation. Like King, your energies – and those of your students – will soar when you can align your "message" with your "delivery," when your values line up with your beliefs and actions, when you are deeply invested in your material and you believe you can make a difference.

But how do we stay energized when too many students struggle with school, when some can't seem to understand and others don't seem to care, when some come to us abused and others face threats on the streets? King once wrote, "Human process is neither automatic nor inevitable. Even a superficial look at history reveals that no social advance rolls in on wheels of inevitability. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle, the tireless exertions and passionate concerns of dedicated individuals... This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." Can we as educators connect this same sense of urgency to student learning?

We keep our students' hopes alive with our energy. In his darkest hours, King rallied us: "We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope." I encourage you to come back to this call when your own energies wane. As students drink from your wellspring of talent, enthusiasm, and hope, know that you must replace those resources with a mixture of study and commitment, play and exercise, stimulation and rest, good friends and family, love and

laughter, and learning. Performers and athletes know well the kinds of training and warm-up needed to get the most out of their gifts. The same is true for teachers.

But how does one avoid complacency when everything seems to be going well? How did King stay focused when he was receiving such a hero's welcome up north? "As long as there is poverty in the world I can never be rich," he wrote, "even if I have a billion dollars...I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be."

So, be vigilant in your work! Align your actions with some deeper purpose. Remember that your energy is a beacon to students; you must keep it lit and shining brightly. Teaching may be part science, but it's so much mystery as well. Be the light your students need.

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ENGAGE

Richard W. Riley

One of the most important goals of good teaching is to engage students in learning. Once a student is engaged – actively interested and involved in what is happening in the classroom – his or her potential for growth as a learner multiplies.

Engaging parents and community members in the work of our schools is absolutely essential in the face of our rapidly changing society. Teachers, parents, and community members engaged together in the work of schools expand the possibilities for each young person.

Teachers, too, must be engaged – first by our teacher-preparation institutions, and later by self-directed learning. As our teaching colleges engage new teachers in developing strategies for teaching and learning, they ultimately benefit our students. And as teachers continue to be engaged in lifelong learning, they make our classrooms places where today's students are learning to be an active part of our technologically advanced information society. The teacher who is engaged in ongoing learning sets the stage for student discovery every day.

America's students are the key to its nation's future, and we must continue to seek out ways to engage them actively in their own learning and to help them meet higher and higher standards.

ENTHUSIASM

David Cernic

If I am not mistaken, the word "enthusiasm" derives from the Greek, and means "to have God in" you. An enthusiastic teacher, it would appear then, is a divinely inspired person. It is someone who loves his or her discipline and loves sharing it with others. It is someone who is, indeed, like a god – that is, someone who can love all beings and has the creative faculty to bring everything to life. Enthusiastic teachers convey more than information. They convey a profound sense of the mystery of life. They enable the magnificent, awesome, and rapturous moments of existence. They display an inner fullness and joy of living. They stir people's souls.

ENTHUSIASM

Paul McSloy

As Groucho Marx might have said as the duck came down, the magic word is enthusiasm. Nothing dramatic or startling in that revelation, perhaps, but it is the essential oxygen in every class.

Even if all beginning teachers start out with an extremely high level of enthusiastic octane fuel, the natural and normal processes – the quotidian, grinding routines – of the classroom will eventually begin to deplete the well. Some will have expected too much in September and will be potential burn-outs or drop-outs by June. Others will have become convinced that they are the serfs in a hierarchical, almost military, caste system that often pays lip service to teaching but really doesn't give a damn as long as parents don't rock the boat.

Lessons that bomb, administrators who bore and bombast, pupils burdened with problems that make paying attention to a lesson on manifest destiny the very least of their considerations...all together, these factors can siphon off gallons of enthusiasm.

How to avoid becoming a drone, a bland, but hopefully benign, teacher, a clock watcher, a time server? How to pull off a miracle five times a day, five days a week, without divine intervention? Can it be done? Yes, it can be done by refusing to allow your stores of enthusiasm to be depleted, and by hanging on for dear life to the excitement and hopes you brought with you to the profession. By reminding yourself constantly of why you chose this path. The effort is exhausting, but the reward for the teacher is the off-hand statement, "I hated history till I had you."

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ETHICAL

Kaye Anderson, Ph.D.

What an exciting time to be a teacher! We are today in the process of reshaping and redefining educational processes and structures so that *every* child has a full and equal opportunity for a world-class education. We are creating a society in which all can function effectively, using their unique talents to extend the blessings of health, literacy, and knowledge.

To maximize the effectiveness of our educational practices in the emerging age of information, innovation, and expanding knowledge, we must make sure *many* people become leaders, entrepreneurs, and pioneers in new ways of being. This, in turn, requires us to renew our sense of ethics. As Ernest Boyer says in *The Basic School* (1995), students must "become disciplined, motivated learners who are physically healthy, socially confident, emotionally secure, and ethically responsible."

Teachers, who teach most dramatically by *modeling* the behaviors and attitudes they expect from students, must self-consciously choose actions that demonstrate traits associated with ethical or successful living. Stephen Covey, in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), has synthesized the wisdom of major cultures into seven habits.

In brief, the seven habits generate continual renewal and growth in four major areas: living, loving, learning, and leaving a legacy. Covey uses the metaphor of taking time to "sharpen the saw" (renew yourself) so you can "saw" (serve) more effectively. Three habits relate to developing integrity (Be proactive; Begin with the end in mind; and Put first things first), and three habits involve extending your influence to others (Think win-win; Seek first to understand and then to be understood; and Synergize).

Practice these seven habits and teach them to your students, and you will be ethical.

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FACILITATOR

Shelley Lipowich

A facilitator is one who sets up a framework and a process within which the student can think, can solve problems, and can grow – without limits.

FAMILY LITERACY

Denny Taylor

The concept of family literacy is a descriptive term that takes into consideration the cultural and language resources of families. There are many kinds of families and many kinds of literacies, and the use of reading and writing within family contexts does not necessarily reflect the teaching of reading and writing in classroom settings. In many societies, children are enculturated into the most common and evident forms of literacy in their homes and communities before they begin school. The accumulated ways of knowing and funds of knowledge of family members – their local literacies – are complexly structured and are intricately woven into their daily lives.

At the beginning of the 21st century, literacy should be considered a human right. Literacy is not always liberating, but it could and should be. Under the present political conditions, working for literacy necessarily involves working with families, becoming a part of the struggle for social justice, and using literacy to create webs of caring in families, communities, and schools. The resulting "product" is not some artificial measure of more "literate" parents and children, but more people working together, grandparents and parents, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, friends and neighbors, celebrating their own literacies while at the same time using the many forms of literacy available to them to find their own solutions to the problems they face within their families, communities, and schools.

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FLEXIBILITY

Julie A. Thomsen

I have chosen flexibility as the quality of a successful teacher for a variety of reasons. Teachers must be flexible with students, colleagues, parents, and curriculum. Nothing is written in stone. We must be open to change and to new ideas. We must treat each child as an individual with unique needs and talents. We must be willing to listen and respond to children, parents, and colleagues in an open-minded way. Even on a day-to-day basis, teachers need flexibility to adapt to schedule changes, to children's behavior, and to administrative expectations. In education today, flexibility is a necessity for success.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Judith Dorsch Backes, Ph.D.

Highly effective teachers use a variety of assessments to gather information on students' progress and on how well they understand the content being presented. Teachers may also use formative assessments in situations in which constructivist strategies are employed to develop knowledge. Formative assessments can show the teacher to what degree, if any, he or she needs to adjust the instruction. In order to be a teacher of excellence, one must use formative assessments on a frequent basis.

FRIENDSHIP

Maxine Greene

Since the days of Aristotle, there have been those who have found friendship – preferably "slow-ripening" friendship – a practice crucial for the building of a polity or the opening of a public space. It may be that friendship should be intentionally attended to by those interested in dialogue and the classroom as a space of excellence. Friendship is a transaction or a mode of relationship that is grounded in mutual regard and ripened in mutual enjoyment and appreciation. Friends, both old and young, can enjoy each other's distinctiveness and changing characteristics; they do not need to be alike, or to stay the same, or to remain anchored in the same place. The richest friendships may be those that involve very different people finding pleasure in what can be discovered by looking differently at the same world, in sharing another's perspective for awhile and finding one's own enlarged.

I believe it is more likely that initiatives for educational reform will be restored to localities when conditions exist for friendship than when they do not. If a way of educating is the common concern, various people's perspectives on the question may enrich the process. As in the case of a novel or a painting, each of which has an actual presence in the world, multiple interpretations make more dimensions visible and worthy of attention; the possibilities multiply along with the questions. If friendship is the paradigm, others' ways of seeing and wondering can be appreciated, even if they conflict with one's own. Others' visions and questions offer ways of transcending one-dimensional grasping, and the dialogue itself may expand. And I am convinced that this allows for the formulation of significant overall advances – both life and professional – that are not conceivable without such expanded dialogue.

When persons of diverse and widening perspectives appear before one another, the reality of the world can be shaped and reshaped. No database, however vast, can capture that changing and temporal world.

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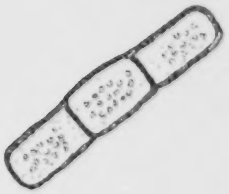
As technology advances, it should be the task of educators to open and maintain the space of excellence. Educators so involved must be the kind who engage the young, make them uneasy, move them to their own quests for meaning in an ongoing praxis – a playful, sometimes contesting, praxis.

Friendship must be nurtured. And there must be continuing efforts to love the world enough to sustain it and continually renew it – to keep it fresh and various and alive.

A GOOD TEACHER

Karen Landsman

Takes care of you
Gives you a band-aid when you are hurt
Helps you if you are having trouble
Never hits
Plays with you
Never takes toys away and keeps them
Helps you clean up
Never yells
Teaches you very well
Tells the truth
Lets you be the expert sometimes



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GUIDE

Judith A. Sykes

The word "guide" best exemplifies my idea of the successful teacher or teaching experience. To guide means to be facilitator, leader, and critical friend. On a journey, a guide leads his or her followers, but allows them to embrace their own discoveries along the way. A guide cares for his or her followers, forging paths and providing maps to the successful completion of journeys. A guide helps each one journey at his or her own pace and style, shedding light in areas of uncertainty.

Along the journey, some will want to travel on their own, meeting the guide later, at a certain point. Others will stay with the group, socializing and clustering among common experiences. A good guide will watch out for all travelers and ensure that none get left behind. A guide often pauses on a journey, pointing out highlights, interesting diversions, and sometimes dangers. These pauses allow travelers to reflect.

To guide learners, a teacher must set paths, construct maps, build in reflective processes, and provide the momentum that brings students to new places of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. The guiding teacher knows each student's journey is his or her own, and is eager to encourage, enlighten, and lead along the individual pathways of learning.

HEART

Adrienne Reiser, M.S.

There are many elements of fine teaching that appear to be unteachable. They are the ineffable qualities that are part and parcel of the human beings that constitute our profession. What I consider to be the greatest asset of an educator is the ability to connect with students at a basic, intuitive level. And although I do not recall having been taught this in class or having read it in text, I know it is as vital as any knowledge I can impart. For want of a specific English word for this quality, I will call it "heart."

Heart establishes almost immediate rapport with students. Upon first acquaintance, and in a continuing relationship, heart is a sensitivity, an empathy, a reaching into *their* hearts and seeing beneath what is or isn't verbalized. I suppose it is an understanding at a "gut level" of what to say, when to say, when to look, when to touch, and when to back off. Genuine caring is transmitted through timing, patience, and facial and bodily expression – and it is sensed by students. I cannot say how I know when to leap and when to retreat: It is simply THERE!

It is not uncommon for me to "see" strengths and abilities in students that others do not recognize. Perhaps this is related to the fact that I have *never* forgotten my own childhood struggles, pain, fears, dreams, hopes, and ambitions. It is easy for me to lay bare my own weaknesses and vulnerability, letting my students know when I have made mistakes or careless, foolish errors – letting them know when I simply *don't know* something! This sincere humility allows them to do the same – and beyond that, to take risks, take chances, have heart and courage in their attempts to learn and grow in an understanding, nonjudgmental atmosphere.

Heart is shared humanity – a deep involvement in my students' joys and sufferings. Where heart exists, students and teacher alike do *not* become disheartened, discouraged, indifferent, apathetic. They do NOT "lose heart," but rather remain "heart-to-heart!"

HIDDEN

Charlotte Brummett

A whole-language teacher is often hidden in the classroom, teaching in an unobtrusive way, facilitating learning rather than directing or transmitting knowledge. He or she doesn't interrupt students' learning with his or her agenda. Such a teacher is also a learner, guiding students with learning strategies to ease their journey as the classroom community constructs meaning together.

HONESTY

Dr. B. Schneider

Honesty in a teacher means appropriate, realistic self-evaluations of teaching procedures used and content taught.

Honesty in a teacher means having open, frank, and positive relationships with students.

Honesty in a teacher means being able to admit being wrong or not knowing, and then searching or researching for what is correct.

Honesty in a teacher means being a sharing and respectful colleague to the other adults in the school community.

Honesty in a teacher means striving to serve as a positive model for students in all situations.

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HOPE

Ruth D. Farrar

Beginning teacher, I am sure you know that to be a good teacher you must have many important qualities: a solid theoretical orientation to how students learn, a thorough knowledge of the curriculum and of developmental instructional and assessment practices, a genuine love for children, and all the interpersonal skills to carry it off. To be an excellent teacher, you must have an essential morality that transcends every decision you make; you must have fortitude and unwavering strength; you must have compassion for all people and a passion for teaching and learning. And for a few, there is one more level in this profession: being an exceptional teacher. To be an exceptional teacher you must have hope – the hope of protest, the hope of possibility, and the hope of power. That hope must be rooted in the literacy and liberation of your students.

It won't be long, beginning teacher, before you find yourself gazing into the eyes of a frail little whisper of a student – eyes that speak of pain or neglect or abuse, that plead for mercy when you ask him to read aloud for you. Or, you may encounter hostility and resentment in the eyes of a hardened self-defensive student when you ask her to rework her paper. Then again, you may be gazing into eyes of apathy, wondering what story you can possibly choose to spark in this child the desire to read. Here you must have the hope of protest. Some will tell you there is nothing we can do. Others will blame the usual culprits: parents, television, society, and so on. "You can't save them all," they will say. They will tell you that some are doomed to failure and that it can't be helped. But you will hear another voice: the voice of hope. With the hope of protest you will take on the pain of your students. You will absorb the hostility, the indifference – and you will protest.

With protest comes possibility. Once you have taken on the pain and hurt of your students, you must give back. You must give them the hope of possibility. Hope is always filled with vague notions of chance, but you must make it real – personally real

and meaningful. Hope, especially when you have had none, must be acquired in little bits of possibility. It is possible to participate in this discussion. It is possible to read for pleasure. It is possible to go to the library and find that book. It is possible to sing in the chorus, to jump the hurdle, to join the math club, to write an opinion paper. It is possible, it is critical, it is *essential* to be literate. Hope raises its voice in protest, and hope reconciles that protest in possibility.

Careful nurturing, daily supervision and vigilance, and constant vulnerability and rejection are all commonplace in the life of the exceptional teacher who is cultivating hope. Hope conforms our experiences to the experiences of our students. With each little possibility there is new hope, and by sharing, reflecting, and growing, students can gradually gain courage, confidence, and competence – the essence of power. The hope of power comes not with conformity or compliance, but with change, diversity, creativity, and imagination. The hope of power comes when students find their voices – the voices of distinction or differentiation, the voices of liberation and possibility. The hope of power will be realized when we step outside the confines of what has always been and begin to dream of what may be. That hope begins in your classroom, today, beginning teacher. That hope begins with literacy. Every one of your students can be, and must be, literate. Literacy *is* hope – hope for the individual and hope for a world where there is justice and peace. Beginning teacher, I urge you to be a good teacher and an excellent teacher and an exceptional teacher. Teach for critical literacy in every student who comes your way. For *no one should be without hope*.

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IMAGINATION

Kieran Egan

Imagination is a somewhat dangerous word to add to the list of desirable teacher attributes. It is dangerous in part because of the freight it carries from the past. Its earliest appearance in the Hebrew tradition is in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, when God expresses his anger at humans' attempts to outbuild His threats: "Nothing will be restrained from them, from what they have imagined to do" (*Genesis, II:* 6). The ancient Greeks had a similar story of humanity's effort to encroach on power that properly belonged to the gods. Prometheus – "the fore-thinker" – steals the gods' fire and gives it to the mortals. As these stories illustrate, one of the subterranean views of "imagination" is that it is that part of our minds that threatens the established order of things. For this reason, those in power – whether gods, principals, public opinion, school superintendents, professors, or whoever – have never welcomed it unequivocally. So calling for imagination, while it may seem innocuous, is inviting teachers to flirt, just a little, with anarchy in their classrooms.

The modern sense of imagination is powerfully influenced by the way the Romantics used the word – as the intellectual power that is central to creativity. The variety of uses for the word in modern times suggests a core meaning of the ability to think of the possible, not just the actual. Thus the imaginative person is one "with the ability to think of lots of possibilities, usually with some richness of detail" (Alan White, *The Language of Imagination*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, p. 185). That ability to think of lots of possibilities, again, hints at disturbance to the conventional, the normal, the routine – and it involves risk.

Imaginative teachers not only risk the unconventional in teaching, but also attend to the imaginations of their students. That is, they not only rethink their own practice to make it vividly engaging, but also strive to stimulate and develop the imaginations of their students. Thus, in their practice, they are sure to use forms of intellectual activity that are especially stimulating to imaginative activity. They think not only about

the content and concepts they are dealing with, but also about images that can give life and energy to those concepts and that content. They draw on vivid metaphors to supplement the logical connections they make. They try always to embed their concepts and content within a strong and vivid narrative structure. They recognize that all knowledge is the product of someone's hopes, fears, and passions, and that to communicate any knowledge meaningfully requires showing it in the context of the human emotions that gave it birth in the first place.

IMAGINATION

Elliot W. Eisner

I believe imagination is among the most important qualities of good teaching. Teaching is an art firmly rooted in imaginative processes, and the contributions of imagination reside at many levels. First, there is the level of conceptualizing what is to be taught and what form the educational situation will take. Imagination is at work here in formulating plans and intentions that influence what and how students will learn. Second, imagination is at work in the interactions between students and teachers. The teacher must always make appropriate adjustments in plans. Regardless of how well they are formed, plans can never provide a script for teaching; the teacher must use imagination to decide which adjustments to make and when and how to make them. Third, imagination is at work in fostering in students their own imaginative potentialities. Genuinely effective education captures the students' imagination and encourages its exploration – indeed, makes it possible for students to fly. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire put it well:

"Come to the edge," he said.
They said, "We are afraid."
"Come to the edge," he said.
They came.
He pushed them.
And they flew.
Imagination helps make flight possible.

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IMITATIVE

Rhonda Clements, Ed.D.

The word "imitative" has a Latin origin meaning "likeness." The English adopted the term at the end of the 16th century and used it to describe a behavior that all children and adults exhibited. The use of the term stemmed from the basic premise that humans tend to mirror one another's interests, forms of communication, and ways of moving.

Effective teachers recognize the child's urge to imitate parents' and peers' verbal and physical actions and behaviors, and they make the most of that urge by serving as models for the child's development. The importance of providing a model for the child to imitate has long been recognized. It is one way children acquire identity and language. The value of this teaching behavior is also apparent in more abstract forms of communication, including movement, music, and dance. For example, the young child's movement vocabulary is greatly expanded each time the teacher conveys the proper name of a physical skill and then demonstrates the movements for the child to copy. For example, the teacher might say to the child, "Copy me as I waddle along and make the sounds of a farmyard duck," or "Let's all gallop forward like a herd of wild horses."

Teachers can challenge children to mimic such expressions as "still as a mouse," "busy as a bee," or "light as a feather," and use their bodies to convey a wide variety of feelings and expressions (e.g., acting fearless, frightened, angry, or gloomy). They can also demonstrate action words in a narrative, assuming the language and body gestures of a storybook character. Upon completion, the teacher offers praise, which encourages the child to participate in additional tasks.

In the area of music, the teacher can physically prompt the child to follow the words and movements of an action song like "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" or "The Wheels on the Bus." He or she can also encourage the child to repeat simple, rhythmic beats using a handheld instrument like a drum, tambourine, or lumni sticks, or to duplicate the slapping, clapping, and pounding

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actions common in hand-clapping chants. The teacher might also use music to imitate different types of sounds and moods, asking children to do the same.

Like music, dance can be used as a means of expression or communication. The teacher can encourage the child to mimic novel ways of moving, to follow him or her along imaginary pathways, or to reproduce a combination of movements after observing the teacher's performance. In each dance-related experience, teachers should display enthusiasm and great facial expression to spark the child's continued involvement.

Successful teachers recognize the importance of learning through observation and demonstration. They realize that many children become easily frustrated and develop anxiety that inhibits further participation unless they have a model to duplicate or copy. This is especially true if a child has no concept of how to perform a task. The teacher should have some discussion of the desired action, followed by a brief demonstration, whereupon the child responds in like manner.

Imitative experiences do not rob the child of opportunities that would otherwise instill creativity and self-expression. Quite the contrary – all humans need a foundation from which to pull creative thoughts, ideas, and knowledge. Hence, imitation can be a valuable tool, which all teachers of young children should use.

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IMMERSION

Dr. John Goodlad

The single most promising way to improve what teachers do – which squares with what most of their patrons want them to do – is to put them into the classrooms well prepared. Teachers who are well prepared are already deeply immersed in the what and how of teaching, have learned their subject matter once for themselves and once for teaching it to others, and are familiar with at least a half-dozen ways of engaging their students with it.

The epistemology of teaching must go far beyond mere mechanics. It must combine generalizable principles of teaching, subject-specific instruction, sensitivity to the pervasive human qualities and potentials always involved, and full awareness of what it means to simultaneously "draw out" and inculturate.

INCENDIARY

L.S. Thorn

The false model of learning is dentistry, where the patient reclines under anesthesia while his cavities are filled. The true model is arson – incendiary collaboration. The teacher must know how to strike the spark, and the learner must be combustible.

INQUIRY

Beth Berghoff, Ph.D.

Children are full of questions, perpetually asking "why" and "what if." They wonder about the world they live in, observe it closely, and piece together their own personal theories about how it works. Many times, their understandings are partial, or even wrong. Five-year-old Brianna, for example, could hardly wait to go outside and visit the garden after planting seeds. She thought the seeds would grow into plants overnight, like they did in her favorite fairy tale. She was terribly disappointed when she saw the barren patch of dirt, but she immediately began to ask, "How many days will it take?" Back in the classroom, she began seriously studying the bulletin board on which we recorded the process of soaking and sprouting lima bean seeds. She was full of new questions.

As teachers, we need to assume an inquiry stance, so that we are actively wondering about and observing the children we teach and the process of their learning. We need to be at their sides as they work and play, listening to and watching them so we can conjecture about or confirm our sense of what they are trying to learn and how to best support them.

Inquiry, however, is more than a stance; is a social process of coming to know. As such, it can provide an underlying structure for our classroom curriculum. The process begins with time for wandering and wondering. As we begin a new unit of study, we invite children to participate in a rich variety of experiences designed to provide stimulating new information and to push them to the edge of their known worlds.

For example, first grader Brittany wanted to know what happened to a seed after the new plant emerged. Her teacher invited her to fill 20 little cups with dirt and plant a lima bean in each cup. Once the seeds had sprouted, Brittany started her observation work. Each day, she pulled one of the plants out of the dirt and drew the seed. This study enabled her to see how the bulk of a seed shrank and decomposed as the plant grew. She also learned a great deal about the roots and stems of the seedlings.

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Meanwhile, Lester, who wanted to know why leaves turned bright colors in the fall, was learning about chlorophyll and seasonal weather changes by looking at videos and reading books. Chelsea was studying diagrams of plant growth and making a list of new words like *embryo* and *photosynthesis*.

New knowledge is as slippery as a fish. Children need time to work with it and to make it their own by talking about it, writing about it, drawing it, or acting it out. They also need the attention of interested others who will respond to their attempts to articulate what they are learning. Given the connections between their questions, Brittany, Lester, and Chelsea made a natural work group. They pieced together their bits of information and decided how to share what they were learning with their peers. They created a three-dimensional poster about the growth of plants, which showed plants of graduated heights labeled according to weeks of growth. They were quite content with their work until they presented it to the whole class and another student pointed out that one of the plants was out of order. It was shorter than the preceding plant.

Another controversy arose when Lester explained that the plants on their poster were trees, with the tallest plant representing a mature tree. Yet the corresponding label said 12 weeks. When the children were asked if they believed a tree could grow in 12 weeks, they disagreed. One said yes, two said no, and they were off on a new investigation. So it goes with inquiry. There is always something more to think about, always something to add or change, and always a new question. Inquiry is what we know from being with very young children. Teaching is what we do to support it.

INSPIRING

Jeanie D. Kaplan

What quality should a teacher aspire to? I would say the quality of being inspiring.

The one teacher who, for me, set a standard for inspiring is Mary Betts, an English teacher I was blessed to have during my high school years. On my first day in her Honor English 7 class, it was excruciatingly clear that Mrs. Betts' credo was WORK. Most of us were somewhat familiar with her reputation as a drillmaster, and I had often heard other English teachers refer to her as a legend. But no amount of advance notice (or warning) did her justice.

That first day, she outlined the term's work, leaving all of us limp in our seats. Didn't she know I had five other teachers who also gave homework, albeit in more palatable doses? And this was my senior term... I had great hopes of finishing my high school career with a minimum of effort and an abundance of leisure time.

It was not to be.

No matter how great the quantity, my homework was always done. I think I harbored the fear that death would be preferable to invoking Mrs. Betts' wrath by coming to class ill-prepared.

She was stern with us, and one never moved or spoke within the realm of her kingdom unless she so commanded. She was omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent... not even an innocent aside escaped her notice. Yet there was something else, something I was less able to define... a spark of warmth that burned brightly in her eyes and pierced my being as the lessons flowed... an energy that surpassed my own... a driving sense of mission that knew no obstacles.

Her lessons were tightly choreographed, and she taught the words to dance off my pages, giving me greater powers of self-expression. I came to love the joy of meeting her challenges, finding them less insurmountable than they first appeared. I began to look forward to this special time, no less in awe, but somewhat less fearful.

And then there was Macbeth! I had never really understood Shakespearean literature and, consequently, did not like it. The Old Bard was so easy to dismiss as "heavy." His characters spoke in a strange tongue, and there always seemed to be a hidden message in their words that eluded me. It was all gloom and doom anyway, and so contrary to the spirit of a 16-year-old. So depressing.

As a January graduate, I was also taking English 8 and suffering a slow death with Hamlet, whose fate seemed more merciful than my own. And now, faced with the prospect of yet another tragic figure hell-bent on self-destruction, I found little to celebrate in my school life.

But I hadn't counted on Mrs. Betts' ability to make Shakespeare exciting. "Double, double, toil and trouble...," she said, and I was a captive. I saw Mrs. Betts clearly as she spoke the words, yet in my mind's eye I saw so vividly witches tending their cauldron. I was in the Scottish Highlands, cowering behind a wind-beaten tree stripped of foliage, and witnessing a great drama unfolding.

Mrs. Betts had us memorize soliloquies, memorize passages, MEMORIZE! How thrilling it was to have that familiarity with so much of the play, freeing me to watch as Mrs. Betts became transformed. The characters were alive! She breathed life into them, became them, filled the room with them.

Her *tour de force* was Lady Macbeth. I can still see her wringing her hands in agony, damning the spots that surely everyone saw. I stared agape, frightened, as this mad, power-hungry queen paced before us, ranting and threatening and plotting her wickedness, drawing me into her conspiracy. And I went willingly.

Then time, having lost all meaning, was given form again by the bell. Jolted, I was caught between two worlds and, for a few moments, sat dazed and unsettled. Colors began to pale and words lost their music as the intrusions of my surroundings violated my better world.

Tomorrow was my only hope... and the tomorrows did come.

Five months of tomorrows. Glorious moments of mystery and excitement and pathos. Each day was a journey to a distant place, and I was the sole traveler. I cannot remember another student in that class. Was there, in fact, anyone besides Lady Macbeth and me?

Upon crossing the threshold of her room, I disencumbered myself of family, friends, and other interests in exchange for the opiate of 40 minutes of daily intrigue. This precious time was my sanctuary, and I savored it until it could be no more.

I graduated, went on to college, and never again encountered a teacher who had quite that gift of magic. There were exceptional teachers along the way, certainly, but the MAGIC belonged to one who stayed behind and captured the imaginations of still more young minds entrusted to her, inspiring them and touching their lives for always.

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INTEGRITY

Leonard Sherman

Integrity implies fulfilling commitments. It means making the well-being of students the fundamental value of one's professional life, and honoring all contracts explicit and implied. When assigning a learning task to students – whether it is homework, a test, major paper, or other assessment – the professional educator honors an implied covenant that the task be truly reflective of the teaching that has gone before, that there be no attempt to trick, and that the task will be corrected and returned in a timely fashion.

Integrity includes ethical relationships with colleagues, as well as a commitment to learn and grow throughout one's professional life, to seriously reflect upon one's practices, to make high-quality decisions, and to set priorities.

Integrity means using praise frequently but not in a lavish, phony way. It means recognizing the needs and concerns of others, resolving conflict tactfully, knowing what information to communicate and to whom, and knowing when to maintain confidences. Implicit in integrity are such character traits as honesty, sincerity, dependability, and fidelity to a code of ethical behavior.

JUGGLER

Carol R. Keyes, Ph.D.

Optimistic, Orchestra Leader, Lifelong Learner, Listener, Organized, Energetic, Enthusiastic, Perceptive, Balancer, Collaborator, Thinker, Caring, Committed, Resilient, Knower, Flexible, Change Agent, Imaginative.

A teacher who is skilled at making connections can use theory to inform practice and use practice to modify theory. The ability to make connections enables a teacher to see the relationship between the ecology of each student and the ecology of the classroom, and to balance between the needs of each individual and the needs of the whole class. The teacher who can make connections will be able to connect to the students and their families and help them connect to her. She will be able to help students connect to one another.

Think of the teacher as an orchestra leader and the students as members of the orchestra. The ability to make connections enables the teacher to work with the whole, leading the class in a melodious symphony, and to work with individuals, highlighting different members for solos. It also enables him or her to work on various parts with members who need more practice with their instruments.

An effective teacher recognizes that her classroom exists in a school, and she stays attuned to school issues and politics in the service of her classroom. The ability to make connections allows the teacher to continually reflect, moving between her own philosophy, goals, and vision, the school's philosophy, goals, and vision, and what is taking place in her classroom. In the classroom she can observe and listen to make effective decisions about curriculum, classroom management, schedules, individual students, and the entire class. The ability to make connections enables the teacher, as a lifelong learner, to continually connect new knowledge to prior knowledge and experience.

KIDWATCHING

Yetta Goodman

The concept of kidwatching is a familiar one to professional teachers who are constantly evaluating their students' knowledge within the ongoing daily curriculum. Knowledgeable kidwatching teachers know a great deal about the language and literacy learning of every student in their classrooms. Their observation takes place in many different contexts because they know students show different capabilities in different settings. These teachers observe their children writing, discussing projects in small groups, playing restaurant, playing on the playground, reading to a doll, reading with a classmate, or working at the computer. They know which students are using literacy and language with confidence and which need greater support.

Kidwatching teachers keep track of which kids they are observing, and when and where the observation takes place. They make notes about important events on post-it notes or labels in short anecdotal statements. Teachers use these notes to jog their memories, so that when they place them in a child's folder later, they are able to expand on the statements and add significant interpretations.

Teachers are involved in kidwatching when they step aside from the ongoing curriculum and observe children from the sidelines. They note who is involved in social experiences and who works or plays independently. They note which students spend the most time on which activities, how students hold their books, how often they participate in reading and writing, and the kinds of literacy they are most engaged by. They watch to see which learning experiences are most relevant for individual children and for the group. The teacher kidwatches during conferences to listen to students read and discuss their meaning construction. Or the teacher may sit next to a child who is writing a story or composing a journal entry to observe the confidence with which he or she writes and the strategies he or she uses.

Teachers also kidwatch when they interact with students by asking provocative questions, conversing one-on-one, or holding whole-class discussions. Sometimes, the teacher captures such interactions quickly, in the style of field notes, while other times he or she sets up a tape recorder to gather information for later listening. The notes and tapes (or tape transcriptions) are often kept in the students' folders to use for discussions about or plan curricular experiences to support development.

Kidwatching also includes formal assessment in which the teacher works with a student or a small group to document students' ways of expressing their meanings, as well as their growing proficiency with grammar and spelling. To evaluate early literacy development, the teacher looks for book-handling abilities, directionality in reading and writing, reading of captions and signs, and reading of connected text.

The major purposes of kidwatching are to assess students, involve them in self assessment, report to parents, keep records for the school, and – most important – inform the development of an enriched curriculum based on evidence of student needs.

KINDNESS

Patricia Broderick

Having been asked to find one word that, to me, described an absolutely necessary attribute of a teacher, I immediately thought of the word "kindness."

All the knowledge in the world of a core subject will not cut it. Nor will knowledge of every teaching strategy that ever worked. Without kindness, none of these things makes a child feel special; none gives him or her the strength to say, "I do not know," "please show me again," or "please help me; I cannot tell anyone else."

So often we hear of the teacher best-remembered after many years – the one invited to a former student's wedding 15 or 20 years after having him or her in class. If we were to ask that bride or groom why it was important to have that former teacher as a guest, the answer would probably involve remembered kindness.

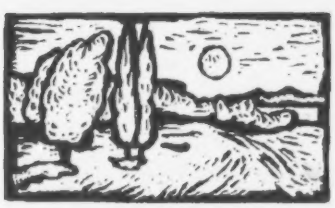
But what IS kindness? To me, it is the inner awareness that every thought and action involving another human being is governed by the Golden Rule of "doing unto others." Does that sound preachy? Not really, if we think about it in the context of our own teaching experiences. From that perspective, the extra mile we walk really makes sense. Difficult? You bet. But that is why there are those very, very few special people in our lives we call "teacher."

KINDNESS

Vivian Gussin Paley

Without kindness, it is impossible to reach out to a child; without kindness, our own hearts grow cold. The act of kindness is always a teacher's first resource, and any daily self-examination begins with, "Have I been unkind to anyone today?" To this we add, "In what ways will I do better tomorrow?" Since it is not an easy task to catch ourselves in acts of unkindness, we had better keep track, perhaps in a daily journal, of our mis-steps and misunderstandings in order to make amends.

We set an example for our students when we say, "I'm sorry, I was unkind to you before. *This* is what I said that was unkind, and *this* is what I should have said instead." If we do this, it will not take long for our students to follow where we lead them: toward the practice of the Golden Rule.



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LAUGHTER

Patricia Reilly Giff

I write because of my fourth grade teacher... although not because of the skills she taught, nor the books she read to us. I write because I could make her laugh. She wore the nun's long habit with rosary beads that clicked against the desks as she came down the aisle, and we wrote, all of us, as she bent over reading our work, admiring, approving, enjoying. I remember the feel of her hand on my shoulder, I remember her nodding, and most of all, I remember how she threw back her head laughing at the characters in my stories exactly the way I meant her to. "Yes," she said, "Yes."

I remembered Sister Raymonda when I began my own teaching career. Despite the fatigue, the sore feet, the sore throat, the plan books, the hot lunch slips always wrong, the money always miscounted. Despite the fact that we were always late, my class and I, skittering down the hall, the last class in the cafeteria, the last out the door at dismissal. I laughed my way through that year, and the kids laughed with me. What I lacked in technical skills I made up with joy, and years later, when I met some of those children, they remembered that. One of them told me she became a teacher because of that year.

Years later I began to write. I wrote for my remedial reading students, sixth graders, many of whom were three years below level and sometimes more. I pictured their grim, angry faces as I began so tentatively, having little belief that I could actually shape a story. But there, all those years later, was Sister Raymonda's hand on my shoulder, her laugh echoing. I have written many books now, and those remedial students still stand in front of my computer. I think of their sad faces, and try to make them laugh.

LEARNER

John A. Ellis, Ph.D.

Teachers must be lifelong learners. They must constantly examine their knowledge and skills, looking for ways to improve what they know and do. They should be perpetually learning from a variety of sources, including their students, their peers, research professionals, administrators, and their own reflections on their day-to-day experiences as beginning teachers. They should adopt a self-critical attitude and never be completely satisfied with what they are doing. They should always be learning and changing.

LEARNER

Debra Herrera

In order to be a successful teacher, you must first and foremost have the mindset of a learner. The teacher who enjoys learning – who is not afraid to say "I'm not sure. Let's find out" – is one who will instill a desire for lifelong learning in students. Such behavior shows students that they, too, can make choices, can direct their own learning, can be independent and self-motivated in their quest for knowledge and understanding. And students who have been "hooked" by pursuing an interest will experience unparalleled satisfaction and be capable of great accomplishments.

It is not only the students who benefit from the teacher's stance as learner. The teacher, too, reaps rewards – both personal and professional – from being a lifelong learner. While doing graduate work, for example, I found that my teaching capabilities were heightened during the time I was enrolled in class. Brainstorming with colleagues and discussing the learning paradigm have greatly influenced my ability to reflect and to evaluate my students' progress. And it seems that I never tire of attending conferences and finding ways to improve my teaching. I firmly believe that learning is addictive.

LISTENER

Dr. David E. Ludlam

A teacher must be a listener. At first glance, that would appear to be relatively easy – we are all listeners. But to what do we listen? What is it that we hear in a classroom? Obviously we hear students, but what is it they are saying? If the room appears well-ordered, and the students respond to questions, raise their hands before speaking, and otherwise pay attention, then listening to them is simple. But is that really listening? Are academic responses and question-and-answer sessions the only listening with which a teacher should be concerned?

To be a good listener, a teacher needs to hear all the talk that children produce. If a classroom does not afford the opportunity for true talk – the talk of social interaction, of building social identity, of expressing individual identity – then the teacher is not really listening to the students. Listening is about talk and talking!

School is the students' primary world. It is usually the first place they can experiment with becoming themselves, free from the watchful eyes of their families and on level ground with those around them. The home belongs to the parents; the church or temple is the domain of the adult parishioners; the community is structured for adults – but school is for youngsters. In school, children learn to negotiate their relationships with peers and to develop their individual personas. It is through talk that this work of social interaction is done.

The role of a school system is not only to educate the students in academic areas and instruct them in academic skills, but also to turn out good citizens, competent workers, and confident individuals. In today's world, the responsibility of helping the student become a complete person has more and more fallen to the educational system. If a teacher is to succeed in helping students develop their individual identities and find their places in the world, he or she must create a classroom environment in which student interaction and talk is valued.

The teacher must allow time for students to talk. That time may be connected to lessons, but it should be structured so that even the shyest of students feels comfortable talking. Students who work in peer groups, and are allowed to talk and interact while they do various activities, learn social rules and develop a sense of being a part of a social group. These are the most important times for a teacher to be a listener, because it is in such loosely structured situations that students really open up and talk freely. It is from listening carefully during such situations that a teacher can come to truly understand his or her students and to formulate a real picture of how they are developing and thinking.

As a teacher becomes a real listener, he or she will become more attuned to the needs of the students and thus become a better teacher.

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LOVE

Wayne B. Jennings, Ph.D.

Love may seem a strange choice for inclusion in a vocabulary for teachers. It may seem too strong a word for what teachers feel for their students, or may carry connotations of romantic love. I mean it, however, in the context of respect – a sort of ultimate liking of every student. It is not enough for teachers to say they love each student; they must act on it to create an environment in which students know that they are loved and cared for, and that their best interests are considered.

I'm reminded of the researchers who, on following into adulthood a group of boys classified as having serious behavior problems, found that a high percentage of them became well-adjusted adults. Tracing those boys' backgrounds, the researchers found that they had come from a certain teacher. They interviewed the teacher to ask about her methods of teaching. Then very old, she said, "I just loved those boys."

We speak of love not just as an abstract feeling. For the human brain to reach its maximum potential for learning, the learning must take place in a safe and secure setting. Otherwise the brain downshifts in some way and excessively filters incoming information for threat, thereby remaining on anxious alert. This lessens learning.

The teacher who truly loves students makes certain that each feels safe and secure by being aware of all interfering factors – like grades, learning styles that don't fit standard educational practices, home conditions, and peer relations. The successful schools and teachers, through a variety of well-known if little-practiced approaches, assure that these factors do not impede learning.

There is little hope of reaching every student if teachers don't like certain types of students. They must love every single one, including those who might be termed "hateable." The teacher who likes or loves only one race or gender or who dislikes "dirty" or "fumbling" students cannot conceal this. At some level of consciousness, students will know. Love means reaching out to all

students, making sure *every* child is treated with courtesy and made to feel welcome – even prized.

At a deeper level, teachers must love themselves, for it is hard to feel charitable toward others if unable to forgive oneself. This means teacher-preparation programs must address the mental health of teachers. It means also that schools must root out practices that in any way demean students. Schools that love children don't continue practices that harm them. Schools where teachers love children are places of dignity, meaning, and community. Classrooms are characterized by energy, enthusiasm, and learning. And students grow into responsible citizens, productive workers, lifelong learners, and creative, healthy individuals.

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METAMORPHOSIS

Fay P. Lukin, M.S. Ed., P.D.

To become a successful teacher, one must be in a continuous state of metamorphosis. The proficient teacher is not born, cannot be produced by book instruction, but evolves from being a scholar of changing aggregate experiences.

The experience of a successful teacher ranges from the college text to pre-service teaching to being a classroom practitioner facing daily adventures. And these are not the only experiences that bear on the metamorphosis – for the successful teacher will extend his or her knowledge-gathering and skills beyond the classroom to use the world as a learning place. The accomplished teacher will reach out into the world and bring it to his or her students, colleagues, and school community.

The successful educator will be flexible, varying his or her teaching methods to meet the needs of students with different learning styles. He or she will recognize that every group of students is different, and even one child leaving or entering can transform the class's demeanor, characteristics, and climate.

Such flexibility will also allow the teacher to seize opportunities to enhance learning and build on spontaneous events – for example, changing a review lesson on adjectives to a lesson on Haiku because students have viewed the season's first snowfall from their classroom window. An effective teacher must be able to convert learning into something every student can comprehend and to make connections between and among content areas: an integrated, spiraled curriculum makes learning more meaningful.

Teachers must also continue to modernize their own education and be willing to try new practices as the field of education evolves. They must take the initiative to contribute and increase the accountability of the teaching profession. They must be willing to take responsibility for their own professional growth through staff development, journal readings, seeking out new resources, taking courses, sharing information with colleagues, and contributing to the school community. The

professional teacher must allow for both self-assessment and feedback from others.

A continued pursuit of professionalism and high expectations, combined with compassion, tolerance, and patience, will metamorphose the pedagogue – a "warm body" with textbook knowledge – into a successful teacher. Such an ongoing metamorphosis takes an abundance of energy, planning, preparation, patience, and organization. But it is a challenge that can be very rewarding.

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MOTIVATION

Sidney J. Rauch

I don't know that motivation is the most important factor in the teaching-learning process, but it must be considered among the top contenders. About 40 years ago, I tried to summarize the learning process in a few meaningful words. I was looking for something that would appeal to teachers and be picked up by educational journals and texts. The latter did not happen; however I came up with four key words: motivation, clarification, application, and satisfaction.

By motivation, I refer to creating a desire and interest in a topic or project. Clarification refers to the teacher's ability to express his or her thoughts in clear, simple language, repeating if necessary to ensure that the student understands what he or she is talking about. Application is the use and transfer of information and strategies learned to other areas. Satisfaction refers to the joy of learning or the pleasure of accomplishment. Maslow in *Motivation and Personality* (Harper and Row, 1954) speaks of "the emotional aspects of recognition, i.e., the lift that comes with insight, the calming effect of understanding."

I first became interested in motivational theory when I shared an office with Dr. Abraham Maslow during Summer Session 1951 at the University of Vermont. Dr. Maslow was editing and reshaping the chapters that were to become the classic text *Motivation and Personality*, which gave the world the now famous "Hierarchy of Needs." Dr. Maslow's hierarchy begins with the physiological needs (the lowest level), followed by the safety needs and then the esteem needs (involving self-respect and the esteem of others). When all these needs are satisfied, we come to the highest level – the need of self-actualization of self-fulfillment. (I often wondered why Dr. Maslow frequently invited a young, unproven doctoral candidate to share coffee and doughnuts with him. The answer is now clear: I was at the lowest level – satisfaction of my physiological needs. The higher levels were a long way off.)

My belief in the power of motivation is based on decades of classroom experience in which I have observed motivated children and adults overcome poor home environments, lack of experience, limited vocabulary, and ineffective teaching. I have observed young, practically illiterate recruits during World War II attend special classes to raise their reading levels. There were few "dropouts." Most succeeded because they had one primary, overriding motivation: the desire to remain in the Army, an environment that was far better than their previous one.

What motivates? There are no guarantees, but the following suggestions have a good track record.

1. Be concerned about your students. They will respond to your interest in their welfare.
2. Provide a stimulating and optimistic classroom environment.
3. Be enthusiastic about classroom activities and projects.
4. Recognize the importance of the "success" factor.
5. Where possible, individualize instruction.
6. Make use of peer influence in recommending books.
7. Give students a range of choices of how to report on books.
8. Use community role models as speakers.
9. Make frequent use of multimedia.
10. Be well informed. Be an avid reader.

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MUSING

Shirle Moone Childs, Ph.D.

My reason for selecting this word is that quite often teachers have to think, reflect, and rack their brains to resolve a conflict or decide upon a pending action.

No matter how thoughtful or carefully detailed a lesson plan may be, there are always issues and situations that require further consideration. Common-sense thinking generally is the rule of thumb; however, I recognize that a beginning teacher does not have a wealth of prior experiences to call upon for support.

In that case, as the teacher says to the children, "put on your thinking cap." Just as students must mull over their decisions, teachers must do the same; a great deal of time is spent musing – and thoughtfully so.

OBUCHENIE (Russian language)

Marilyn C. Myers

This word means both teaching and learning. Such a quality is critical for anyone in the posture of "expert or novice" – how can we even pretend to have taught if there is no indication that students have learned the message or concept? Another reason the concept of *obuchenie* is powerful is that it clearly balances the responsibility for the task. A teacher who possesses this quality cannot quickly blame the student for not learning; he or she recognizes that the responsibility for learning is a shared one.

OPEN

David A. Adler

Good teachers are open to new ideas and experiences; open to the questions and answers of their students; and open to new programs and methods of reaching *all* their students. Good teachers ask challenging questions and are open to unexpected answers. They are happy to digress. They show real interest in their students' ideas.

OPENNESS

Nancy Buhr

Openness is a lack of pretense. It is being free of prejudice, inviting and unhampered by restrictions. Successful teachers – those who are comfortable with who they are – exhibit openness. They are unafraid of opinions, constructive criticism, new experiences, and learning opportunities. They do not prejudge the value of ideas or endeavors, but allow themselves first to experience and then to evaluate without preconceived restrictions.

Successful teaching does not take place in a vacuum, but in the interaction of ideas between teacher and student, student and student, and student and teacher. Every day, each class will present unpredicted and unpredictable events: a play on words, an original thought, a strategy in a new context. Teachers with openness embrace and invite these events, seizing every opportunity to learn and grow. They do not begin with all the answers, but *pursue* them by being open to a myriad of shared ideas and activities. Perfection may be the ultimate illusion, but openness, while in pursuit of that illusion, will add richness and refinement to each teacher's art.

OPTIMISTIC

David Levande, Ed.D.

In my judgment, optimistic describes one important characteristic of a successful teacher. Optimistic teachers provide a positive, caring, nurturing, encouraging, upbeat, and exciting learning environment where most students thrive both academically and socially.

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OPTION

Estelle Aden

From the Latin *opiare* (to wish; to desire).

Recognizing that we have choices is one of the most liberating aspects of thinking and learning. By exploring options, the student can be curious, playful, and probing. The questions he or she formulates are more important than the answers:

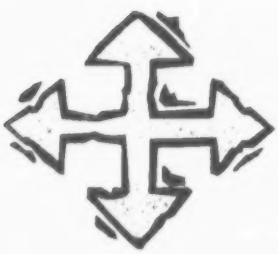
Which is the most direct way?

Which is the most experimental way?

Which is the most appropriate way?

Which is the most fanciful way?

Exercising alternative options creates a tolerance for different ideas. Exploring the possibilities that imaginative thinking offers adds exhilaration to learning in every discipline.



PARTNER

Harvey Alpert

A teacher must see himself or herself as a partner in the learning process – as a collaborator who can help each child develop the independence to become a contributing member of society. Too often, because a teacher must critique a child's learning efforts, he or she becomes an agent of failure rather than a partner in success. When a child perceives a teacher's comments as negative, he or she may become unwilling to take risks, fearing further criticism. But, in actuality, a child *must* be willing to risk failure to discover what produces success in any learning endeavor. The child who is not willing to risk failure becomes dependent on the teacher to show how problems should be solved. When, instead, he or she should be discovering the nature of the problem, finding ways to dissect it, and attempting many solutions to see which is most effective.

By encouraging risk-taking, the teacher becomes a partner in the child's competency building, and therefore becomes a partner in helping him or her achieve success. If a teacher simply conveys information and constructs the problem, rather than allowing the child to discover the problem in the natural course of living, that teacher is not truly educating the child. Instead, he or she is teaching the child to be dependent upon authority figures for solutions to life's problems. This dependence is the exact opposite of what we are attempting to achieve. Education is a growing independence and ability to face life's problems and find solutions.

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PASSION

Terry L. Murphy

The word "passion" often brings to mind images of relationships, of affairs of the heart, of love – and the whole range of nuanced emotions that go along with those images. Yet passion is an *idea*. It is arbitrary – an abstraction relative to contextual settings, dependent upon us to give it its various meanings. Once we have done this – once we have given it a contextual setting – the idea of passion becomes something quite concrete, something quite alive.

We recognize passionate people when we see them. They are motivated, curious, dynamic, and almost always interesting. They draw our attention to them; we learn from them, and some of us may desire to be like them. Passion is this desire to be something that we are not, but might be.

Many people, for many reasons, stop believing in themselves; they lose contact with their passion. Children, however, do not, for they are directly connected to their passions. Witness a playground at recess or a school yard at the close of a school day, and you will witness collected masses of passion. Yes, children are the most passionate people I know. They are infinitely motivated, infinitely curious, infinitely dynamic, and infinitely interesting – all of them. They are constantly learning. They demand answers to their questions and seek an understanding of their world. Their one burning desire is to be just like us, the adults who surround them. If we have lost contact with our passion, what is there for them to desire?

Yes, passion is about the relationships we have with every living and nonliving thing with which and with whom we come in contact. It is about the affairs we establish within those relationships. And it is about the love we have for what we do in those relationships and affairs. Passion varies only in degree, not in kind, for there is only one kind of passion. It is the very stuff of life and of living. It is responsible for our very existence; without it, we would be zombies – people without souls, without hope,

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without humanity. Children should be allowed to pursue their passions and should be surrounded by people who are passionate. We should settle for nothing less.

PASSION

Harold Tanyzer

If I had to choose one word to characterize a successful teacher, it would be passion. The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* defines passion (as used in the present context) as "a strong or extravagant fondness, enthusiasm or desire for anything." A teacher who is dedicated and committed to teaching and working with children needs to possess passion.

PERFORMER

J. Dan Marshall, Ph.D.

For me, teaching is a lot like performing on stage. To make it work, the performer must know herself well. She must play to her strengths and continuously push her limits. No less important, she must know her music and her instrument to honestly recognize her connections to them. She must know enough about the context in which she is performing to meaningfully connect her performance with life beyond her immediate venue – to help her audience link what they are hearing both with their deeply personal world of the moment and with the world *beyond* the moment. She must know her audience well enough to permit empathy and insight to flavor her work.

A performer must also know how to creatively and appropriately utilize all she knows. There is more to a great performance than sheer technical ability – there is also song selection, lighting, physical movement and positioning, careful sound mixing, and, most importantly, timing. The performer cannot simply "work" an audience, but must work *with* her audience, reading their faces and bodies, and taking their cues – always willing to consider a change in plans.

Finally, a performer must remain true to her feelings, emotions, and deepest beliefs. The best performers are those who invite their feelings to flavor their knowledge and skills during a performance; who connect honestly with their audience as sentient beings; and who transcend the ordinariness of their work by welcoming emotion into the moment.

PERSEVERANCE

Janet Groomer

Some teachers are "naturals" – gifted, exceptional educators who seem born to teach. Others, the majority, have become exceptional educators through perseverance.

During a teacher's first year, with his or her first group of students, there is a desire and enthusiasm that will never again be equaled. Experience makes a teacher better, but nothing compares to the excitement of the very first class.

Over my past 41 years of perseverance, I have made some observations that I believe will always make good teachers better. First, watch and listen. Experienced staff members may not appreciate hearing all of your ideas as the newest teacher. Whenever possible, observe master teachers at work with their students. If there are consultants or curriculum directors in your district, ask to meet with them. I was fortunate to have access to consultants who suggested ways to organize my classroom, and several of them used my students to demonstrate lessons and procedures.

Some days will be better than others; however, giving up should never be an option. Each day at school is a new beginning. Children are resilient and forgiving. When you give your personal best, they will match your efforts. Be steadfast in your journey as a teacher.

Find one or more collegial confidants with whom you can share concerns and ask questions. When you connect with someone in your school, you gain additional support for your work and, ultimately, for your growth. Administrators are friends, too! Yes, they evaluate your performance, but a principal can be a professional "pal" to guide your progress.

READ! In the early years you should seek out magazines and books with an abundance of classroom ideas (I refer to these as teaching cookbooks). They will give you ideas for bulletin boards and lessons, in addition to helping you integrate instruction. Later, professional journals and books will become prominent elements in your library. Journals help you see the "why" of

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instructional practices. They are also good sources for learning about new books and other educational tools. Such professional materials are often available in media centers; alternatively, a group of teachers can share the cost of the books and journals they wish to read.

Join professional organizations such as the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, or others. These organizations have local, state, and national meetings, which provide opportunities to network with other professionals, learn about effective lessons, and view new materials.

Teachers reach excellence with continued, patient effort. Perseverance is a cornerstone in the process.

PERSEVERANCE and REFLECTION

Chip Wood

Perseverance is a skill children learn only when given the time to endure. Students need extended blocks of time in school to do their best work. When classes are divided into "Carnegie units," or short "time-bites" of isolated curricular offerings, children have neither the time to practice nor the time to revise their thinking.

Reflection is looking inside. How are we as teachers to know the inner wisdom of our living in the face of the rush-and-tumble expectations of daily schooling? How, indeed, are we to give children the space and discipline and modeling of such practice? Circles of quiet, moments of silence, thoughtful listening to the ideas of classmates, acknowledgment, appreciation, gratitude for the gift of a daily learning community – all these deliberate acts of empathy and reflection strengthen the listening soul.

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REFLECTION

Thomas R. Hoerr, Ph.D.

Teaching is an ever-evolving act. The world around us is changing rapidly; one can hardly pick up a newspaper without reading about a technological advance or new insight into how the brain works. Whether teaching younger or older students, leading first graders to read or helping 18-year-olds grapple with advanced calculus, the superb teacher – the one who makes a difference in the lives of students – is always growing and learning.

This superb teacher learns from peers. Sharing information about students and ideas about curriculum and instruction – learning with and from one another – creates the collegiality that keeps teachers growing and learning.

Professional growth and learning are continuous; they must be! As teachers continue to grow and learn, experience yields deeper levels of understanding. It is important for a teacher to understand not only how effective he or she has been, but what he or she can do to become even more effective. It is not enough to know whether a student learned; a teacher must understand why and how the student learned. This kind of learning cannot take place without reflection.

Reflecting on practice, musing on one's role and behaviors, and ruminating with others about what worked well, what misfired, and why these things happened is essential. Because teaching is an art, not a science, understanding learning and finding better ways to help students learn is an ongoing process that starts with reflection. At its most effective, this reflection is done with colleagues on a regular basis. Whether talking about using the theory of multiple intelligences to help students learn, developing rubrics to assess student presentations, or identifying student work to serve as exemplars, this kind of collegiality and reflection benefits both students and teachers. Through collaborative reflection, teachers create and become part of a learning community in which everyone grows and evolves. When it is done best, this reflection is done in a larger context of

hypothesis-forming and hypothesis-testing, teachers gathering information about what works and what can be done better.

As teachers use reflection to better themselves, so too should they create an environment for their students in which reflection is valued. More and more, we recognize that if we want students to succeed, we must provide them with skills in the affective domain. Whether one terms this arena "moral intelligence," "emotional intelligence," or "the personal intelligences," the point is the same: Students of all ages must become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and know how to use their strengths and navigate around their weaknesses. Students must understand and know how to work with others. An essential component of students developing their personal intelligences is providing the time and structure for them to reflect, to assess their own academic performance and relationships with others.

RESPECT

Lilian G. Katz, Ph.D.

One of the essential attributes of a good teacher is the disposition to respect learners. This means offering whatever skills, knowledge, ingenuity, patience, and all other important elements of teaching you have to every single child, whether you like the child or not. It is probably not possible to like or to enjoy every child you encounter as a teacher. But it is both possible and essential to respect each of them. Respecting them involves, among other things, attributing to them a strong capacity to learn, to overcome setbacks, to become interested in worthwhile things, and to persist in the face of obstacles. It also means treating them all with dignity, even when you disagree with them. Indeed, to respect, accept, and treat with dignity a child you agree with or like is easy. Anyone can do that. But it takes a true professional to be respectful and accepting of a person one dislikes or disagrees with.

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RHETORIC

Stephen Tchudi

The word "rhetoric" is widely abused and misunderstood, and is commonly associated with politicians and used-car salespeople. In popular parlance, it means dishonest, puffed-up language. "Don't give me rhetoric," we say to the politician, "give me action."

Rhetoric has not always carried the negative meaning in its two-thousand-year history of looking into how discourse functions in the world. Yes, rhetoric can mean misleading, propagandistic, and bombastic language. And teachers should help their students become aware of how language can be manipulated and distorted, how it can be employed to bamboozle. Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner called this teaching students to develop a "crap detector," and they argue that it is among the highest functions of schooling.

However, rhetoric goes far beyond the negative; it is also concerned with the successful use of language – with how we use words in poetry and prose, to share and develop ideas, to argue passionately for our beliefs, to tell secrets, to make love. Rhetoric is concerned with the people who use language, with writers and readers, speakers and listeners, filmmakers and viewers. Rhetoric asks, "How did that editorial work?" "Did the filmmaker get across her ideas?" We as teachers should want our students to be more than crap detectors. We should want them to be rhetoricians – using language skillfully, adeptly, and forcefully and responding to it alertly, sensitively, intelligently, and critically.

In the 20th century, rhetoric has increasingly concerned itself with the "hidden" features of language. Words are not neutral symbols, whether used in science, mathematics, or the humanities. The words we select are determined in part by who we are and what we value. It makes a big difference, for example, whether we call a female a "woman," a "chick," a "girl," or a "babe." Language has effects in scholarly study as well – such as when we identify George Washington as "the father of our country," "the first President," "a retired military leader," or "an ax-wielding cherry picker." Whether we are discussing history,

music, economics, or psychology, we are doing so in words – and those words carry latent values, implications, associations, and connotations.

Every class in every school can thus be a rhetorical classroom, a place where discourse comes alive, where students talk about real issues and problems, not phony textbook "problems" and "exercises" – a place where teachers analyze and support critical language use. A rhetorical classroom will be filled with language as students write about what they read and think about, as they formulate their ideas clearly and precisely in words, as they push and are pushed to use language in increasingly diverse ways for larger and larger audiences. By the time students finish formal education, they should be rhetoricians in the best sense of the word – not sleazy politicians or TV hucksters, but highly critical, articulate thinkers, readers, writers, speakers, and citizens.

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SCHOLAR ETHOS

Olga M. Welch

The term "scholar ethos" (academic ethos) refers to an attitude of total commitment to learning as a basis for scholarship. While it is analogous to academic achievement motivation, it applies more specifically to students and teachers of color or from disadvantaged backgrounds who develop an academic identity and strong commitment to achievement. Learners with a scholar ethos recognize that their exclusion from education opportunities and other forms of advancement may be unrelated to their potential or their proven record. Their performance and their unwavering commitment to excellence demonstrate a conscious decision not to limit their academic attainments or expectations, but rather to achieve despite inequities and other unfounded, negative messages from their surroundings about their abilities to succeed. Scholar ethos is a self-sustaining, personal definition of scholarship and a view of oneself as a scholar, which builds upon strong academic skills and support from homes and communities, and is driven by a personal sense of pride in achievement. Excellent teachers not only exhibit this quality, but also encourage and support it in their daily interactions with students.

SELF-EXPRESSION and IMAGINATION

Bernice Cullinan

Self-expression is the ability to use words, symbols, or movement to say what we think or feel. Reading and writing, absolutely necessary requirements for a successful life, are cornerstones of the school curriculum. But true self-expression goes beyond knowing the basics. Many words carry more than a single meaning – in fact, they often convey several layers of meaning. Children who learn to use words carefully are empowered in ways that others cannot comprehend. They can craft language to more accurately convey their feelings and they can interpret the words of others to detect subtleties. Both are essential ingredients of success.

Imagination is the ability to create images in the mind or mental pictures of something not physically present. Students who learn to control words can see beyond their literal, factual meanings. They become critical readers who judge the accuracy, authenticity, and veracity of words they read. Reading between the lines, as well as reading beyond the lines, is a necessary skill in today's world. Children who cannot imagine a world they cannot see are handicapped; they will never be able to create a better world.

Teachers who help students learn to use words well also help them gain control of their lives. And there is no greater gift tha being able to help children become all that they can become.

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Gregory A. Smith, Ph.D.

One of the most profound discoveries I made as a high school teacher – and then as a college professor – was that classroom events and relationships with students reveal important personal issues that require attention and resolution. This was a part of teaching that no one prepared me for, but that has proven to be one of the more valuable aspects of the vocation.

With the limitless range of student personalities and problems, the people we meet in a classroom inevitably remind us of our own pet peeves and fears. And given the human tendency to reject in others what we dislike in ourselves, treating such students with equanimity requires understanding the source of our reaction. I regularly encounter students who take on the skeptical and challenging role I occasionally adopted vis-à-vis my own teachers and professors. When this happens, my relationship with those students remains more positive if I recognize our similarities rather than respond defensively to their questions and attitudes. At other times, students remind me of people around whom I felt uncomfortable when I was growing up. My tendency was once to remain guarded around these students, erecting a barrier of aloofness. I have found, however, that when I can see what I am doing and approach such students with openness, we are able to build a relationship that is conducive to learning.

A similar dynamic occurs in relation to my teaching colleagues. I am naturally drawn to those who demonstrate a professional presence similar to teachers I have found worthy of respect and admiration in the past. Conversely, I am inclined to become distant from those who call up less pleasant memories. Recognizing this dynamic does not mean foregoing the benefits of discernment – some forms of teaching and student-teacher interaction are preferable to others. But it can lead to a less rigidly judgmental response to people who deserve care and consideration.

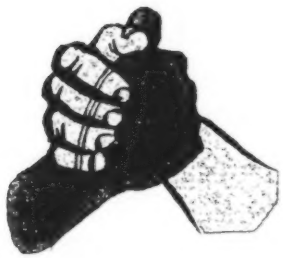
I believe good teachers have the ability to step back from the classroom or faculty room and examine the origins of their

specific responses to the people they encounter there. This process requires both mindfulness and the willingness to look dispassionately at aspects of our own history and behavior that are not always easy to accept. Treating our students and colleagues with fairness and compassion demands no less.

SELF-RENEWAL

Peyton Williams, Jr.

Professional educators do not view their work as a career but as a profession. Indeed, there are many professional educators who view their work as a "sacred" calling, bringing to it a deep personal commitment to make a difference in the lives of others. They are consistently engaged in sustained professional development and dialogue. They are lifelong learners, modeling the love for learning that they desire to see in their students. They are not isolated. They seek to promote collegiality and to find time for reflective thinking on the arts and sciences of teaching, learning, and leading. In essence, they are self-renewing individuals.



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SENSIBILITY

Francine Sikorski

Underlying teachers' concerns for their students' learning experience are their concerns for the students' motivation and self-concept. The word "sensibility" seems to define these concerns. Literally, sensibility means the capacity for physical sensation, as when used in the plural, i.e., sensibilities, delicate sensitive awareness or feelings. A teacher who exhibits the qualities of sensibility may promote the learning experience in others, thus nurturing the student's self-concept and encouraging the development of the learner's awareness. Learners who have the qualities of sensibility are open to new adventures and ideas; they may be curious and thus inspired to explore beyond what they expect of themselves.

Finding success with this quality of sensibility may augment their confidence and increase their motivation. Many cognitive theorists have said-that an individual's performance is not changed by incentives alone, but by how learners think and feel about the incentives. Sensibility is greatly connected to education and literacy through one's capacity to motivate and be motivated, and one's keen awareness and application of personal gifts and talents.

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SENSITIVITY

Bob and Doris Keane

According to most, the word that best describes a good teacher is sensitivity. From that, some branch off to creativity. The teacher must understand each pupil as an individual with different needs and capacities. And the teacher must engage the student's interest, creativity, and innovation.

At the college level or above, the issues change. Sensitivity is still important, but the personal is less exigent in college teaching. Here the teacher must convey a discipline and its ramifications – subject matter is more developed and specialized. Even so, it all goes over the students' heads if the teacher is insensitive to each student's capacities and involvement. The educational experience depends on the teacher's combining discipline with humanity. Teachers must evoke reaction in their students. But this is only fully achieved through the students becoming involved with the course material, getting interested in it. The teacher must convey sensitivity to his or her students, both through interest in his discipline and through evoking student thought and response. A sensitive teacher must be aware of the classroom atmosphere; the creative teacher must arouse student interest and desire to learn. A teacher must care – and must show it – as an inspirer of learning. Sensitivity (and creativity) are still the relevant words.

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SPIRITUAL PEDAGOGY

Susan A. Schiller

Since 1990, educators around the country have been using the word "spiritual" to describe teaching and learning that comes from the heart and soul. A spiritual pedagogy does not evoke religion or religious practices. Instead, it develops our intuitive understanding and our ability to trust in the inner terrain of knowing and learning. The spiritual dimension relies heavily on contemplation. It requires deep reflection on our motives for and the outcomes of our classroom and life experiences.

Experiential activities that work from, but also add to, cognitive learning often are used to initiate the spiritual dimension. For example, approaches that seek to enhance cognition might include: felt-sense; affect; silence; visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning; writing as healing; and various forms of meditation. While classroom activities are generally student-centered, goals include recognizing and calling forth the greatness within the subject matter as well as within the student and teacher. In this way, a spiritual pedagogy establishes a holistic foundation from which teachers and students can create ethical and healthy identities.

A spiritual pedagogy further enhances our learning experiences with joy and excitement about learning and about choices we make in our personal, professional, and public lives. It also establishes an intrinsic desire for lifelong learning. As with other types of pedagogy, teachers who choose a spiritual pedagogy should approach it from a preexisting spiritual foundation of their own and should have personal experience with some of the practices before introducing them to students. For those who are new to this way of teaching, I would suggest reading such authors as James Moffett, Parker Palmer, John Miller, Richard Graves, Mary Rose O'Reilly, Rachel Kessler, Regina Paxton Foehr, and Susan A. Schiller.

STRUGGLE

Alan Singer

There is no magic wand for being a successful teacher. There is no incantation that causes change to happen instantaneously. People tend to change slowly – and why should we expect students to behave any differently from other people? Being an effective teacher, therefore, means engaging in a long-term struggle to convince students that your goals for the class make sense and are worth examining. To paraphrase the African-American civil rights song "Freedom Is a Constant Struggle," successful teaching is a constant struggle.

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SUBVERSION

Lynda Stone

In my early years of university teaching, I chanced to meet a wonderful African-American professor of English whose motto for "the good life," one he shared with all of his students, was "survive and subvert." I adopted the maxim and, to this day, pass it on to my education students as the way to be a good teacher. To it I have added one more rule: "Don't do it alone." That is, it is far easier to subvert in schools if you join with others to do it.

First, a word about survival. All of us, I think, do what we must to survive. We all live with difficulty to varying degrees. Some are fortunate, and their difficulties pale in comparison to those of others; this is seen daily in classrooms, schools, and communities in this country and elsewhere. Some have hope, and others do not. Perhaps what we all need most to survive is generosity – both to and from others. Indeed, one might argue that if hope and generosity in their fullest actually prevailed, there would be no need for subversion.

Today, subversion carries a connotation of underhandedness as well as of perspective and change. However, its original meaning, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates, does not seem to have contained that connotation; as with most words, its usage has changed over time. Its derivation is Old French from the 12th century, with appearance in English recorded two centuries later. Initially, it meant demolition of a stronghold; other semantic descriptions attributed to it were to turn an object upside down, and even to upset the stomach. Overthrowing, demolishing, turning over, and uprooting all indicate change – as does the contemporary reference. As indicated, subversive action today seems covert, and may arise in connection to the immaterial sense of overthrowing a law, rule, condition, or system. Moreover, overthrow is supplemented and supplanted on the soft side by "disrupt" and on the hard side by "corrupt."

This leads to several questions: Who is subversive? What defines an act of subversion? Is a disruption not only of "version,"

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but also of hierarchy, inherent in the concept? Is it moral or lawful? And, finally, what does it have to do with education and teaching?

The answer to the last question is that hierarchy and unequal power pervade education, not only in the organization of the institution, but also in its opportunity. Moreover, much that is "powerful" in education is taken for granted – rhetoric of reform notwithstanding. The moral educator, then, is actually one who subverts, who does not "take for granted," who asks questions, who seeks change. To do this, I believe, you must work locally and envision globally.

Finally, across times and places, there can be change in the meaning of terms like subversion. Language changes practices, and practices change language. Either way, the good teacher can "seize the day" today and can both "survive and subvert."

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SUPPORT

Michael P. Wolfe

The expectations for new teachers are greater than ever. One challenge is staying abreast of new curriculum reform and innovations in instructional strategies. Another is relating to an increasingly diverse student population that brings different levels of learning readiness, languages, values, and experiences to the classroom. This new cultural and linguistic diversity can often create a more stressful classroom environment, especially for a new teacher.

The literature on new teacher induction is replete with references to poor and inadequate support for the beginner. Problems and concerns identified with new teachers include lack of assistance, isolation, challenging assignments, little or no orientation, exhaustion, and too little direction in curriculum and instructional delivery. New teachers have also cited a lack of useful feedback and a pressure to perform as well as more experienced colleagues.

These problems may explain why 30 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first two years of experience, another ten percent leave after three years, and more than half leave within five to seven years. There is even some evidence that the best and brightest are the most likely to leave. Now, with student enrollments in schools climbing again, we cannot afford to lose teaching talent. The loss is too great for new teachers, the profession, and, most importantly, the students and society in general.

We must support our new teachers by providing them with the training, orientation, and ongoing guidance they need to be successful. All beginning teachers should participate in local programs for continuing education, assistance, and support. All available educational institutions, colleges, universities, teacher centers, school districts, regional service centers, and professional organizations should collaborate on delivering beginning teacher induction programs.

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TEACH

Ignacio L. Götz, Ph. D.

The pursuit of excellence in teaching is the worst enemy of excellent teaching. There is neither superior nor inferior teaching; there is only teaching. In some situations and places, it is *this*; in some situations and places, it is *that*. No more can be said.

A teacher once came to the sage Heide and asked, "How can you say that no method of teaching is better than another? Don't you know how many have researched this point, and what their conclusions are?"

Heide replied, "The truth of the *sutra* is that there is neither truth nor falsehood, neither dharma nor no-dharma, neither method nor no-method. Things just are." Of course, you should review your teaching actions, but without judgment. If something needs to be changed, just change it.

Teaching is what teachers do with the intention of letting pupils learn. After all, the pupils' freedom to reject both the teacher and what is taught must be safeguarded. Otherwise, it is not teaching, but indoctrination or brainwashing.

Teaching happens; it is not achieved, much less learned. The fact that there are so many claiming to teach how to teach is proof that teaching cannot be taught. Nor can it be defined. The only valid "definition" of teaching is the narration of what teachers do.

The sage Kendo once said, "Many claim to be teachers even though they have not been enlightened. Like reckless horsemen they dash about knocking down people and property without regard for their well-being. They take great strides without knowing where they are going. They claim to come from temples [schools of education], but they had no masters. Temples cannot give enlightenment; only masters can."

Teaching is not a profession; it is a mode of being in the world to which some are "called." The sage Heide used to say, "Woe to those teachers who forget their being!"

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A disciple asked him, "How can one pay undivided attention to one's teaching and one's being?"

Heide replied, "A true Master is one who realizes that being and teaching are not two."

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THEORY

Jerome C. Harste

Teachers often complain that their university course work is "too theoretical." What they want are practical ideas that work in the classroom. Yet, I would argue that nothing is more practical than theory.

Hal Abrams says that everyone is a philosopher. What a philosopher does, he goes on to explain, is make sense of experience. In similar fashion, I wish to argue that everyone is a theoretician. Like a philosopher, a theoretician makes sense of experience in the context of his or her evolving belief systems about the world. Most of what we notice fits, or makes sense, in light of our belief systems. When what we notice doesn't fit, we need either to dismiss the anomaly as not valid or to reflectively adjust our theory to make what is new fit.

Put simply, a theory is a system of beliefs that we have developed over time. With more and more experience, our theories of the world become more and more fleshed out. One does not need to be conscious of a theory to have one.

Theories allow us to make predictions as well as to envision new possibilities. Without a theory of the world in our head, we wouldn't be able to cross the street. With a theory, however, we look both ways, note cars and distances, watch crosswalks, and develop new possibilities when things aren't working the way they should.

Our behaviors can indicate what theories we hold about the world – just as others' behaviors can indicate the types of theories they hold. Take, for example, behaviors associated with reading. Both teachers and children hold theories of reading, whether or not they are aware that they hold these theories. And their behaviors often point to the types of theories they hold. Children who see reading as a sounding-out process display reading behaviors that differ from behaviors displayed by children who see reading as meaning-making process. Similarly, teachers who see reading as a matter of "breaking the code" teach in different ways from teachers who see reading as a meaning-making process.

Theories explain why what you believe makes a difference. Teaching reading, for example, is never a matter of just adding one more skill to a child's repertoire of reading strategies. While we might teach skills, what really matters is how this skill instruction affects the child's theory of reading. Too many reading teachers make the fatal mistake of teaching skills without evaluating what effect those skills have on the child's evolving theory of reading.

I was watching a young man write a story one day. He asked me, "How do you spell *cloud?*" I said, "Do the best you can." He wrote "c-l-d," then paused, and wrote "e," saying as he did so, "I'll bet there is a silent "e" at the end of that word."

Undoubtedly, this student's teacher never meant to teach him that English was a language in which silent "e's" float about magically. I suspect she introduced the silent "e" thinking it was a surefire way to support his reading development. Despite good intentions, however, what the child learned was far different from what the teacher thought she was teaching.

Observing the effect our teaching has on children allows us to modify, sharpen, hone, and sometimes even abandon our most cherished theories. It is the interplay between theory and practice that allows us to grow – to become, in a sense, a head taller than our former selves.

Teaching is, in fact, theory all the way down. Not only do we need to be theoretical in our approach to teaching, but the more we articulate the theories we operate upon, the more analytical and reflective we become. Show me a good teacher, and I'll show you one who can articulate the theories on which he or she relies. What is true for us is equally true for children. That is why effective teachers not only set up lots of opportunities to learn new things, but provide ample time for children to talk about and articulate what they have learned and why it is important.

There really is only one catch. While operating theoretically, learners must believe that at least one tenet of their theory is wrong. For it is taking a stance, replete with doubt, that propels both the processes of re-learning and re-imagination.

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To lose sight of theory is to lose sight of what teaching and learning are all about. No single concept is more necessary nor more powerful in education.

TOTAL INVOLVEMENT AND TOTAL COMMITMENT

Tom Wagner

The music program at Stewart School in Garden City offers an excellent example of both total involvement and total commitment. Total involvement meant that out of an enrollment of 475 students, 300 were playing instruments. The Moms' and Pops' Band rehearsed Friday afternoons using their children's instruments. A Faculty Band and Adult Education Band played the Big Band sounds of the '40s for local benefit programs.

Total commitment meant the director worked to build a program of excellence for all to be proud of.

As I told the Regents, I know I am tracking something that is good and right for the children. Music enhances their lives and makes them better people. I try always to develop a positive, pleasant attitude toward music – this attitude makes for achievement and solid progress.

I believe that harmony in sound often leads to inner harmony when the student feels pleased with his own contribution. This ultimately leads to a happier student. Enthusiasm must be transferred to the children. I believe this holds true for all areas of education.

TRUST

Mary Kitagawa

The greatest contribution a teacher can make is to trust students: To behave as *if*... from the beginning and repeatedly, no matter how many times that trust may seem premature. If trust is genuine, students absorb it and live up to it over time.

Students *all* come to school at the beginning of the year, and at the beginning of each day, hoping for the best day or year ever. If those supersensitive antennae of theirs sense that the teacher does not share their vision, it breaks into tiny shards. It may be behavior or it may be learning. The student who knows her reputation for disrupting class has preceded her enters to find herself seated apart from other students, or forbidden to sit by a friend on the rug – and the splintered dream of a fresh start drops to the floor at her feet. The same may happen to her classmate who struggles to read, spell, or compute, and finds a self-fulfilling prophecy in the teacher's approach to her learning. These students have been stereotyped before they arrived. Sometimes even whole classes carry stereotypes.

The old advice to young teachers, "Don't smile before Thanksgiving," is a symptom of failure to trust. Escorting students in military fashion and debating whether to be at the head of the line to control speed or at the rear to see all the mischief... what a lack of trust! I am not naive, but I believe students appreciate order in crowded hallways enough to work on any problems their behavior may cause. I anticipate the necessity of those September reminders about hallway traffic, but I expect my optimism about their compliance to be rewarded, even while knowing an occasional, further reminder may be necessary. So, I don't accompany them to lunch unless I need to buy mine as well or I want the chance to socialize with them on the way. If I am busy, I expect them to get there appropriately on their own. If I hear about a stampede, I mention my disappointment and remind them that I still trust them to do it right on the next occasion.

There must always be a next time, whether for the class as a group or for any individual. I once had a student with major

behavioral problems. I wondered if he realized how often I had to remind myself to trust him. A few years later, I met him, and he told me that what meant the most about being one of my sixth graders was the way I made it clear that "every day is a new beginning." Through the years, my frustrating moments with him have been forgotten, and some of the funniest exchanges we shared now stand out in my memory, as I trust they do in his. Everything I have written here about behavior has an equally positive effect upon curricular expectations.

TURBULENCE

H. Thomas McCracken

Beginning teachers are generally assumed to be good if they act orderly and organized, look weathered, and sound scholarly. As most beginning teachers don't do these things or have these qualities, they – and others – often believe they should try to get through the first two or three years rapidly to obtain those forthcoming attributes, much as we believe teenagers should "get it over with fast." However, I would like to make a plea to beginning teachers – a plea for seeing the turbulence of the first years as very much a part of the profession. As an integral part of teaching and learning, not something to be gotten over quickly.

I mean by turbulence an immersion of feeling, cognition, and perception into a foreign environment, an environment that often appears to threaten previously held ideas and positions. The turbulent play between two cultural entities, a new teacher and students who reflect their own community's culture most powerfully – a play that is later covered-up, papered-over, and ignored – is one that should be cherished. When Sappho asks, "Where did my virginity go?" she asks, I imagine, for a recovery of her initial vision, for the understanding of a time when she was different and represented a significant contrast to her environment. All experienced teachers ask that question with Sappho. Would we remember better if we had sympathetic and weathered scholars? Turbulence would have not been merely natural, but treasured as a way of teaching and learning. Let us start our first years in teaching by celebrating the very turbulence that characterizes our immersion.

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VERSATILITY

Dr. Mary McKnight-Taylor

Versatility is one of the most important personal characteristics for effective teachers.

In exploring the meanings of versatile, we find that the most striking and prevailing of the defining words has to do with ease of movement, whether mental or physical. A secondary meaning implicit in the definition is centrism, or being neither far right nor far left. Yet another meaning refers to comprehensive ability or "all-around handiness."

When we think of a versatile person, we think of someone who responds with good humor and patience to roadblocks or unexpected events – whether they be mechanical, technological, logistical, or human. Because the versatile person has a broad knowledge base and multiple layers of skills, he or she is able to "go with the flow," build a "bridge," or create a "rest stop."

Human interaction with environmental circumstances has a broad range. It may be reactive as well as proactive. Persons characterized as versatile initiate or respond to a given situation differently, contingent on a number of factors. They exhibit varying levels of energy, employ different strategies, draw from a broad range of communication modes, and generally rise to the challenges related to life's tasks. A hallmark of a versatile person is a strong, positive sense of self. This positive attitude permits the person to meet new or changed circumstances with a degree of confidence that promises successful negotiation.

While it is impossible in this forum to enunciate all the nuances of the characteristic, it is apparent that versatility requires high intellect and some of the other personality traits listed earlier. If we were to cluster them, they would fall, for the most part, under the heading of cognitive and affective characteristics. A positive energy flow and a broad skill bank also would be important.

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VISION

Barry D. Amis, Ph.D.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech is one of the best vision statements ever written because it so eloquently articulates the ideals at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. While it may not be as eloquent or as ambitious as King's, every teacher should have a vision of what he or she would like to accomplish in the classroom. A vision is a broad, timeless concept that helps guide core values. It should always be future-oriented and should describe the result that the teacher would consider ideal. Classroom goals, then, (e.g., to do well on standardized tests) support and move students toward this ideal.

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VISION

Keith C. Barton

Most teachers enter their profession because they have vision – they want to accomplish something in the lives of others. Some want to help students think critically about social issues; some want to nurture their creative potential. Some teachers want students to develop pride, confidence, and self-esteem. Some want them to feel safe and cared for. All these are admirable and praiseworthy visions, and all can have an important impact on the lives of students. The differences among teachers lie not so much in the precise *content* of their vision, but in how well they use those visions to guide their daily decisions. A teacher who keeps his or her vision foremost in mind will have a meaningful and rewarding career, while a teacher whose vision becomes overwhelmed by the demands of the job will become frustrated and ineffective.

Everyone knows someone who doesn't drive well – someone who clutches the steering wheel tightly, watches the road intently, and jerks the car from side to side every few seconds. Such ineffective drivers use "low-aim steering" – that is, they watch the section of the highway directly in front of them and make constant adjustment to keep the car between the lines. The result is an unpleasant, herky-jerky ride. Good drivers, on the other hand, use "high-aim steering." They keep their vision focused on a point much further down the road, and steer toward that destination. Their adjustments are effortless and almost unconscious, and their passengers enjoy a smooth and pleasant ride.

The distinction between low-aim and high-aim steering applies equally well to the classroom. Every day, teachers face countless distractions – the child whose nose is bleeding, paperwork that must be completed immediately, the VCR that doesn't work, the mislaid T-shirt order forms. Some teachers spend their days fixated on these distractions, pulling their students (and colleagues) along with them in a jerky ride of continual reaction and adjustment. Focusing on each new crisis is a sure path to disappointment, because the distractions never

end; at the end of the day, the nosebleed may have been stopped and the order forms recovered, but the teacher can reflect on few accomplishments of any real significance.

Other teachers use the equivalent of high-aim steering in their professional lives. They focus their attention on their ultimate goal – their vision – rather than the steady stream of distractions that come with the job. These teachers deal with the same complications and annoyances as everyone else, but, like good drivers, they set their sights on a point farther down the road; they keep the minor issues in perspective because they are more concerned with the vision that brought them to teaching in the first place. When their day is over, they've forgotten the broken VCR and the rushed paperwork. Their thoughts are occupied with larger and longer-range concerns: how well they're helping students think critically, nurturing their creativity, developing their self-esteem, or helping them feel cared for. These are the thoughts that are rewarding – the reflections that come from vision.

VISIONARY

Nancy Krodel

I feel that a new teacher must have a clear vision of what excellence looks like and be willing to pursue that vision. He or she should be aware of future needs of students and should rejuvenate him or herself by being widely read professionally and by attending in-service opportunities that broaden his or her perspective. Beginning educators must constantly be in pursuit of excellence, reshaping their vision as they grow and mature professionally.

WORLDLINESS

Fred Wolff

The quality I believe contributes to teaching excellence is worldliness or, in a simpler form, outside classroom experience. Worldliness allows the teacher to combine his or her personal experience with a particular classroom topic. While not applicable to all teaching, this quality is a valuable resource when working with small groups in either an indoor or outdoor setting.

For example, a teacher who has experienced social contact with people from different states or countries might bring that experience into a discussion of how things are done in different cultures – comparing "ways of doing things" familiar to the class with "ways of doing things" elsewhere.

Worldliness might also be based on personal contact with nature – an exposure to natural processes and environments. Through time and travel, a teacher will experience firsthand the processes that form the natural environment. These may be as simple as a snow or rainfall or as exciting as a personal experience with a natural hazard like a flood, earthquake, landslide, or volcanic eruption. Exposure to different geographic regions also illustrates contrast and gives the teacher the ability to point out comparisons. For example, a teacher might be able to show how peoples' lives are influenced by climate and geography – from the hot and wet Florida Everglades to the colder and drier regions like Maine. Teachers with such experience can expose students in any location or area to firsthand knowledge of the conditions of life in other areas.

Naturally, the older and more experienced the teacher, the greater will be his or her degree of worldliness. The important point is that outside classroom experience through travel will enhance a teacher's ability to relate to students and to make their learning more real and immediate.

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YES and SOLITUDE

Joan Nothern

"Yes" is the most enabling word in our vocabulary as teachers, as readers, and as learners. It is the response that allows us to suspend judgment and take a journey with an author. It is the response that allows us to hear the unique reaction of a student and, in so doing, visit his or her point of view. It is the response that encourages us to try new methods and, at the same time, confirms the value of tried methods.

Saying "yes" continually opens doors to the next stage in relationships with students, with fellow teachers, with literature, and with professional evaluation of research. It is the openness that permits the magic of new connections and insight. "Yes" is the path to creating the joy in teaching, as each encounter is new.

Reading is the interaction that lets us experience ourselves as original minds. However, we can only do so yes by yes. Reading is ultimately an act of composed solitude. Page and mind become one to the exclusion of external distractions. The mind is recreated by the act of reading, so the reader emerges from solitude modified, enhanced, different.

As we see students directed more and more toward cooperative learning strategies, we may come to see reading as a committee activity. Reading may come to include interpersonal reactions, negotiations, and interpretations. This external stimulation is invigorating and may lead to the satisfaction of mutual agreement. But it should not be made such a priority that our students lose the spiritual quiet to read, the composure to cultivate solitude.

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Daily inspirations for teachers

- Definitions
- Personal Thoughts
- Words of Wisdom

From some of America's best known educators, here are the ideas that can start your day or stimulate new ideas for class activities. One hundred dynamic personalities give you the words that are important to them and what those words mean for teaching.

CRYSTALLIZING – "We cannot make individuals into something they are not meant to be, but we can help them realize their potentials and guide those potentials in constructive ways." *Howard Gardner*

HEART – "There are many elements of fine teaching that appear to be unteachable. They are the ineffable qualities that are part and parcel of the human beings that constitute our profession." *Adrienne Reiser, M.S.*

STRUGGLE – "There is no magic wand for being a successful teacher. There is no incantation that causes change to happen instantaneously. People tend to change slowly – and why should we expect students to behave any differently from other people?" *Alan Singer*

Lenore Sandel, Professor Emerita of Reading and Literacy Studies at Hofstra University, has over three decades of experience in teacher education with a focus on reading specialization, children's literature and preparing teachers to teach language arts.

ISBN 0-9719874-9-1

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